THE NATIONAL INTEREST

'Global Warming'
by Russell Seitz

NEWS WORLD
24$5.50
872-0190

Inventing the Soviet National Interest
Stephen Sestanovich

From Geopolitics to Geo-Economics
Edward N. Luttwak

The Death of the Third Way
Seymour Martin Lipset

Plus

Leon Aron on **Boris Yeltsin** • *Mark Falcoff* on **Raymond Aron** • *Tod Lindberg* on **John le Carré** • *Jacob Heilbrunn* on **Adenauer's Germany** • *George Szamuely* on **Richard Nixon**

Essays & Comments:
Paul Craig Roberts, Michael Vlahos, Adam Garfinkle, Michael Charlton & Owen Harries

Number 20 / Summer 1990 / $5.50

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

EMPIRE OF LIBERTY

The Statecraft of Thomas Jefferson

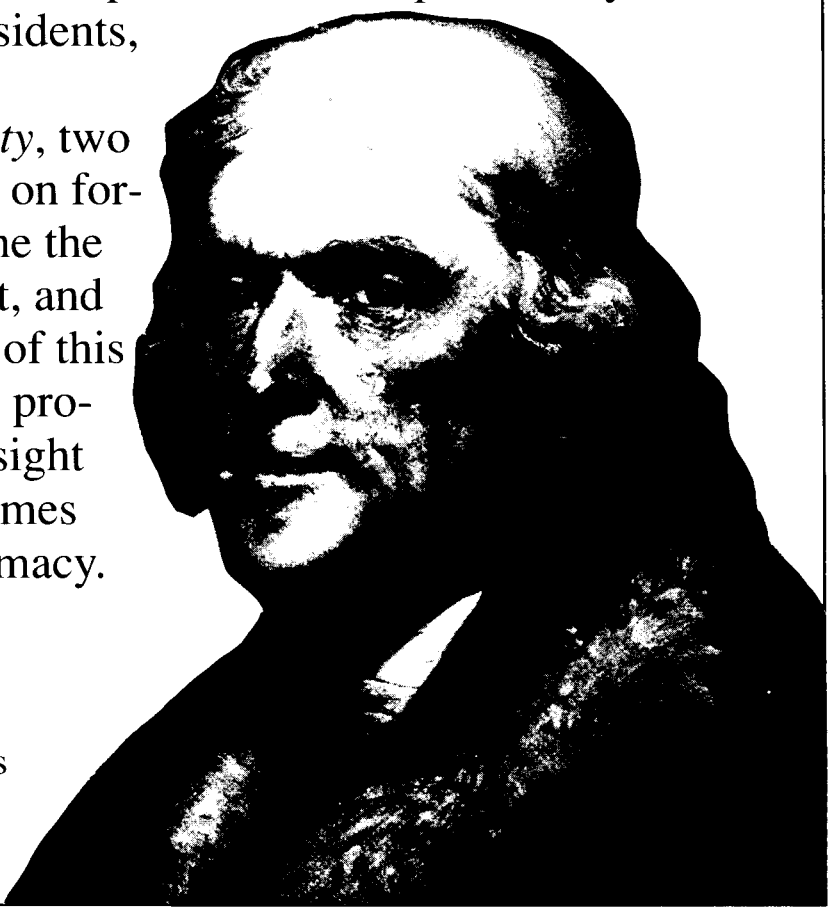
ROBERT W. TUCKER & DAVID C. HENDRICKSON

A slaveholder and a *philosophe*, an aristocrat and a democrat, a pacifist and an imperialist—these contradictions define both the politics and the personality of one of our greatest presidents, Thomas Jefferson.

In *Empire of Liberty*, two leading authorities on foreign policy examine the public life, thought, and ambiguous legacy of this revered statesman, providing valuable insight into the classic themes of American diplomacy.

$24.95, 360 pp.

At better bookstores
or directly from
Oxford University Press
200 Madison Avenue
New York, NY 10016



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE NATIONAL INTEREST

NUMBER 20, SUMMER 1990

Contents

ARTICLES

Inventing the Soviet National Interest
Stephen Sestanovich ____ 3

From Geopolitics to Geo-Economics
Edward N. Luttwak ____ 17

The Death of the Third Way
Seymour Martin Lipset ____ 25

Waiting for Yeltsin
Leon Aron ____ 39

A War Against Fire
Russell Seitz ____ 54

Up from Mercantilism
Paul Craig Roberts ____ 63

STARTing Over
Adam Garfinkle ____ 71

AMERICA'S PURPOSE—A SERIES

Look Homeward
Michael Vlahos ____ 49

BOOKS

One of Ours
Mark Falcoff ____ 77

John le Carré, Glasnostic
Tod Lindberg ____ 83

The House that Adenauer Built
Jacob E. Heilbrunn ____ 89

Richard Nixon and the Ruling Elite
George Szamuely ____ 95

FOR THE RECORD

The President's Men at the NSC
Michael Charlton ____ 101

QUARTERLY

Credit Ratings
Owen Harries ____ 109

THE NATIONAL INTEREST (ISSN 0884-9382) is published quarterly in Spring, Summer, Fall, and Winter issues by National Affairs, Inc. EDITORIAL AND BUSINESS OFFICES: 1112 16th Street NW, Washington D.C. 20036. SUBSCRIPTION PRICES: $21 for one year, $38 for two years, $54 for three years (add $7 annually outside the United States). Second-class postage paid at Washington D.C. and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *The National Interest*, P.O. Box 3000, Dept. NI, Denville, NJ 07834. "The National Interest" is a registered trademark of News Group Publications, Inc., and is used by National Affairs, Inc. under license; it may not be used without permission of News Group Publications, Inc. Articles appearing in this journal are abstracted and indexed in *P.A.I.S.*, *Historical Abstracts*, *International Political Science Abstracts*, *U.S. Political Science Documents*, *Political Science Abstracts*, and *America: History and Life;* and available on microfilm from *University Microfilms International.* © 1990 by National Affairs, Inc. *The National Interest* is printed by William Byrd Press, Richmond, Virginia.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE NATIONAL INTEREST

PUBLISHER
Irving Kristol

ADVISORY BOARD
Eliot A. Cohen
Midge Decter
Martin Feldstein
Samuel P. Huntington
H.J. Kaplan
Jeane J. Kirkpatrick
Henry A. Kissinger
Charles Krauthammer
Edward N. Luttwak
Daniel Pipes
Robert A. Scalapino

CONTRIBUTING EDITOR
Robert W. Tucker

VISITING FELLOW
Gary J. Schmitt

EDITOR
Owen Harries

EXECUTIVE EDITOR
Mary Eberstadt

MANAGING EDITOR
Stephanie Abbajay

ASSISTANT MANAGING EDITOR
Aileen C. Hefferren

ASSISTANT TO THE EDITORS
Karis Kercher

ASSISTANT EDITOR
Michael Rust

EDITORIAL OFFICES
1112 16th Street NW, Suite 540, Washington, DC 20036 (202) 467-4884
Fax: (202) 467-0006

ADVERTISING
Correspondence should be addressed to the managing editor.

SUBSCRIPTION ORDERS AND INQUIRIES
$21 for one year, $38 for two years, $54 for three years. Write to:
The National Interest, P.O. Box 3000, Dept. NI, Denville, NJ 07834
Credit card orders call 1-800-543-4860.
Overseas orders please add $7 annually.

NEWSSTAND DISTRIBUTORS
Bernhard DeBoer, Inc., 113 East Centre Street, Nutley, NJ 07110
Ingram Periodicals, 1117 Heil Quaker Boulevard, La Vergne, TN 37086-7000

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Inventing the Soviet National Interest

Stephen Sestanovich

AT THE END of July 1988, Eduard Shevardnadze called together the staff of the Soviet Foreign Ministry to consider the results of the just-concluded 19th Party Conference. There was much to digest: at the conference Mikhail Gorbachev had unveiled his plan to create a new legislature, thereby beginning the redistribution of institutional power that continues to this day. In addressing his colleagues, Shevardnadze himself introduced an important innovation: Soviet policy would now be guided by a new concept, which he grandly described as "a *massif* of vitally important categories stand[ing] here before us in its full height." That concept was "the national interest."[1]

The oddly dramatic unveiling of this everyday Western term was an effort to back out of two separate dead ends of Soviet diplomacy—one practical, the other theoretical. The more familiar of these was the failed foreign policy of the Brezhnev era, which, in the new leadership's view, had wasted resources and brought the world's leading states together in a solid anti-Soviet coalition. A clear verdict was possible: the "national interest" had not been well served.

By mid–1988, denunciations of past policy had become a staple of Soviet rhetoric, and what made Shevardnadze's speech significant was not that it repeated the criticism yet again. Of far greater moment was the attempt to alter the terms by which policy, past and future, was to be evaluated. The leadership apparently wanted a new political vocabulary for weighing—and justifying—changes in the Soviet Union's international role. In beginning to talk about "the national interest," Shevardnadze inaugurated what has since become a full-blown discussion of the principles and purposes that should guide the world's most formidably armed post-imperial, non-ideological medium power.

Precursors

THE WORK OF devising a terminology to criticize the Brezhnev record began with (and in some respects, even before) Gorbachev's accession to power in 1985. That terminology quickly became known as "new thinking," and its slogans had an airy, often irritating piety. According to Aleksandr Bessmertnykh, the new ambassador to Washington, what was involved was nothing less than a shift from "egoism" to "altruism." The Soviet Union proclaimed its conversion to "common human values"—a set of objectives said to include avoiding a nuclear holocaust, staving off environmental

Stephen Sestanovich is director of Soviet and East European studies at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, D.C.

[1] *Vestnik Ministerstva Inostrannykh Del SSSR*, August 15, 1988.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

catastrophe, promoting economic betterment among the world's poor, and so forth. Such laudable sentiments were perhaps not totally meaningless (and did help to downgrade Marxism-Leninism), but the high level of generality at which they were propounded made it hard to believe that they could be a practical guide for policy-makers. Moreover, Western efforts to get behind the Spaceship-Earth rhetoric were usually futile. Soviet diplomats seemed to have instructions to say that we are all, metaphorically speaking, in the same boat, but no brief to explain what that metaphor meant.[2]

The main substantive problem with the Soviet emphasis on common human values was that it failed to address those values that are *not* common. It provided, as a result, little evidence as to how the Soviet Union would view future clashes of interest between itself and other states. This was a more serious difficulty than whether Gorbachev was sincere about "new thinking," or whether the leadership as a whole shared his outlook. The vapidity of the outlook made sincerity easy. No conservative member of the Soviet national security establishment had to worry much that, at least in its early version, "new thinking" would put him out of business. Undoubtedly, the military was a little uncomfortable with the idea of "mutual security," but they did not need to (and did not) quarrel with it too openly. After all, some interests, such as preventing nuclear war, *are* mutual and cannot be secured for one side at the other's expense. But to admit this does not mean that other, narrower interests can or should be handled in the same way. Should the Kuriles be part of Japan or the Soviet Union? Should Germany be part of NATO or the Warsaw Pact? Such matters are unavoidably the stuff of zero-sum competition.

Until the internal Soviet debate took up the difficult job of distinguishing among interests, adjustments of policy were likely to be made on a case-by-case basis, with little cumulative effect. As one member of the Central Committee suggested recently, the genius of "new thinking" was that nobody could disagree with it—but this also blunted its impact. "Common human values" provided a picture of a new international order in which states would begin to act cooperatively. The new values did not describe how the Soviet Union should conduct itself in the meantime.

The language of "interest," by contrast, provided a framework in which unilateral Soviet actions—even unilateral concessions—might make sense. For a leadership seeking to reshape foreign policy, this was a major advantage. As it happens, we know that such steps were under review in the months immediately after Shevardnadze's speech. The troop cuts that Gorbachev announced at the UN in December 1988 were presented to the world as an expression of "common human values," but in the high councils of the Soviet state they were surely considered from the standpoint of interest.

In broaching the idea of a "national interest," Shevardnadze introduced a term that for decades had had almost no place in Soviet parlance. When Soviet leaders did use it, it was to refer to other countries, rather than their own, and then usually to disparage them. For example, Andrei Gromyko often complained in his annual address at the opening of the UN General Assembly about the American propensity to identify even small matters as "vital national interests." This, he said, was arbitrary, arrogant, insufferable, indefensible, etc. Nikita Khrushchev used the expression in issuing warnings to governments that cooperated with the U.S. or allowed American bases on their territory. In the event of war, he said (and here he conjured scenes of unlimited carnage), the result would not be, shall we say, in their "interest."

---

[2]Central Committee official Vadim Zagladin, for example, offered the intriguing thought that common human values are "dialectically" linked with all other interests and values. In other words, they are in some respects the same, in other respects the opposite, and in the end will be supplanted by something new.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

One surprising past use of the term was by the now little-lamented Leonid Brezhnev, who in addressing the 24th Party Congress in 1971 declared that the Soviet Union would never abandon its national interests. This peculiar remark was intended as a rejoinder to the taunts of Mao and other Chinese leaders that Moscow had abandoned its commitment to world revolution. His current reputation as an "old thinker" notwithstanding, Brezhnev adopted a modern position: ideology could not be allowed to push policy in directions that damaged the interests of the Soviet state.

The same counterpoint between ideology and interest was also implied by Gorbachev, who used the term before Shevardnadze's 1988 speech. Gorbachev has often quoted Palmerston's dictum that a state can have neither permanent friends nor permanent enemies, only permanent interests—meaning, of course, that Soviet interests are not really different from those of any normal state. They have been "de-ideologized." Yet he has had little to say, beyond this recurrent refrain, about exactly what Soviet interests are. Gorbachev frequently insists that disputes are to be resolved through a "balance of interests"—a principle that enshrines compromise as a rule of Soviet policy, but does not define the interests among which a balance should be struck.

Shevardnadze's approach has been more radical. Far from treating the national interest as something permanent, he described it to the Foreign Ministry as "a very mobile category, dynamic, *constantly changing*." In doing so, he was not (as one might have thought) simply dodging the difficult task of definition. He was acknowledging that the meaning of the term is politically up for grabs, subject to the same debate that glasnost has brought to other facets of Soviet life.

Such has been the purpose of the ensuing debate about the national interest—in defining it, to change it.[3] Three principal changes stand out: first, a repudiation of past policy in favor of more minimal goals; second, an opening up of the process by which foreign and defense policies are formulated; and third, a readiness to defer to international opinion. The first of these—minimalism—has narrowed the scope of Soviet interests. The second and third—domestic pluralism and sensitivity to outside views—have broadened the ranks of those with a say in defining legitimate and viable Soviet purposes.

Minimalism

IN CONTEMPORARY Soviet analyses, the national interest *is* constantly changing, just as Shevardnadze suggested—and the revisions are all in one direction: downward. Having asked themselves what the country's real interests are, Soviet leaders have consistently answered, much less than we used to think.

The answer began with a re-evaluation of the environment in which the Soviet Union finds itself—a re-evaluation, that is, of the nature of capitalism. Because past Soviet policy was so often justified by the need to prevent "encirclement," a more relaxed view of capitalist drives could be the starting point for a full overhaul of strategy. Khrushchev and Brezhnev, of course, established long ago that the growing power of the Soviet Union and its allies made nuclear war avoidable. The doctrinal change that Gorbachev has proposed is, however, much more thorough. In his February 1988 speech to the Central Committee, Gorbachev made clear that for him, the internal dynamics of capitalism cannot be said to lead automatically to imperialism. Western corporations have learned that they can do business profitably around the world without the support of aggressive foreign policies. Most of them do not depend on ever-higher military budgets for their profits, and in any event the democratic institutions

[3]This enterprise, it should be said, is not mere sport for maverick Soviet academics making the most of glasnost. The participants include Politburo members and Foreign Ministry officials as well as the more familiar "policy intellectuals."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of the West impose a strong check on any potential "war party."

This new assessment was not, it should be said, a sudden awakening from decades of nightmarish insecurity. What it did was undercut the public rationale that supported Soviet military power and an ambitious foreign policy. Soviet strength ceased to be the key to peace because capitalism, it could at last be seen, *checks itself*.

The impact of the "discovery" was plain in countless ways, including the somewhat light-hearted new tone of Soviet spokesmen on security issues. Viktor Karpov, the deputy foreign minister in charge of arms control, has advocated "a new psychological approach to international relations," whose wholesome lesson is that "no one should have an enemy as such." In a television discussion last year, *Izvestia* columnist Aleksandr Bovin stumped his fellow commentators by challenging them to specify what, if any, foreign dangers the Soviet Union faced.

In this safe new world, guidelines for the size of Soviet armed forces have steadily narrowed. Shevardnadze announced in 1988 that the effort to be as strong as all potential adversaries combined had harmed the national interest. This formulation (which did, strictly speaking, leave open the possibility that the Soviet Union should be the strongest *single* power) has since given way to others that retreat further, and retreat above all from claims of equality with the United States. Soviet officials are now busy correcting what N.N. Spassky, a Foreign Ministry specialist on the U.S., calls "deformations in our understanding of parity." The Soviet Union, he argued in a July 1989 article in the ministry's journal, *Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn*, must get over the idea that "now that we are equal, that means everything they can do, we too have to be able to do."

"New thinking" has become, among other things, a case for unilateral Soviet withdrawal from the arms race. Obviously the deterioration of the Soviet economy and the domestic preoccupations of the leadership put a large premium on arguments explaining that nothing important will be lost by cutting back. Many Soviet analyses put the case more strongly: great damage would be done by *not* cutting back. In a landmark article (recommended to U.S. officials by Soviet diplomats and said to have been praised by Shevardnadze), the director of the Foreign Ministry's international organizations division, Andrei Kozyrev, described the harm done to international confidence when a state's military capabilities are out of proportion to its national interest.[4] Moreover, he suggested, what the Soviet national interest requires is less than that of other powers. Border forces can provide for Soviet security; the U.S. and Japan, by contrast, depend on secure access to foreign energy supplies, and more generally on maritime superiority. This acknowledgment of special Western needs was unusual in itself; more significant was the fact that it justified an American world role but dismissed one for the Soviet Union. The bottom line was simple and startling: "Our country has no interests justifying the use of military resources outside the borders of the socialist community."

Kozyrev also criticized past Soviet policy in the Third World, arguing that reflexive support for anyone quarreling with the West had only aroused distrust of Soviet motives. Underlying such support, he said, was a basic misunderstanding of conflicts between the West and the developing world. For Kozyrev, the latter's problems have to do with too little capitalism, not too much. Seen in this light, U.S. policy toward them can hardly be considered oppressive. To the contrary, conflicts between the United States and Third World states should be resolved "in a way that takes both sides' interests into account." Above all, the Soviet Union should stay out. What Moscow has too long refused to recognize is that Western interests in the Third World are "immeasurably broader and deeper" than those of the Soviet Union.

[4] "Trust and the Balance of Interests," *Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn*, October 1988.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Other Soviet officials have taken aim at the world role of which Brezhnev and Gromyko boasted when they claimed that no major issue of international relations could be resolved without Soviet participation. This boast, it should be said, did not reflect a particularly ideological ambition, and at the time many in the West actually treated it as proof of the domestication of Soviet diplomacy. What Moscow wanted—so the argument went—was the respect and access symbolized by a place at the negotiating table. In the Soviet Union, by contrast, this *tous azimuts* diplomacy is today considered mindless aping of the West. In the September 1989 issue of *Kommunist*, Igor Malashenko, a member of the International Department of the Central Committee, advised against trying "to be equal in everything."

> Today, it seems, we can quite painlessly "exclude ourselves" from the struggle that has been forced on us for "spheres of influence" in regions that have no real meaning for our security. Our interests will not suffer even in the event that the American leadership lacks the political vision and realism to take analogous steps. How they waste their national resources—that is their business.

Such analyses do not shy away from stating their baldest conclusion: the Soviet Union cannot really expect to be a superpower and is harmed by the effort to be one. Andrei Kortunov, author of a number of influential articles on defense policy, has insisted that the quest for superpower status has kept the Soviet Union from behaving like a great power with national goals that go beyond mere equality with its rival. Futile competition with the U.S. lures Moscow into alliances that serve no perceptible interest other than a superficial diplomatic parity. Why, for example, pursue close ties with North Korea, when South Korea has so much more to offer? (Kortunov also faults Gorbachev for his sloganeering use of common human values: these have become a new "dogma" and prevent more substantive discussion of national interests.)

Accepting a larger American role in the Third World was one thing; accepting it in Eastern Europe, another. Western analysts rightly wondered whether the reassessment of Soviet interests could possibly extend to the Warsaw Pact. After all, even the most radical revisions of Soviet interests—such as Kozyrev's argument about interests justifying the use of force—made exceptions for "the socialist community."

Nevertheless, as the governments of the old Soviet bloc fell in late 1989, Soviet officials stepped forward to explain that their collapse was, in Shevardnadze's words, "unambiguously and unreservedly" good for the Soviet Union. Last February he told the Canadian parliament:

> I would like to say straight out that this is not an attempt to put a good face on things. It is in our national interest, our historical, and even our daily interest to ensure that the states that are our neighbors are stable and prosperous. We can only gain from this.

Having once taken precedence over the interests of neighbors, Soviet interests had now become *derivative* of them—of other states' prosperity and well-being. A month later, Shevardnadze went so far as to say that the Soviet Union shared the concern, often voiced in the West, that communist setbacks in Eastern Europe might be only temporary. It is therefore essential, he told a Soviet interviewer, that the changes in the region "gain momentum and become irreversible. . . . As to Soviet interests, a democratic East Europe will best protect them. That is my deep conviction."

These warm endorsements were, of course, accompanied by efforts to salvage something from what seemed an increasingly one-sided resolution of the Cold War. In particular, the issue of German membership in NATO became the crux of East-West maneuvering over the shape of the new order. Yet here too many Soviet statements signalled a lack of conviction. As the vice rector of the Foreign Ministry's Diplomatic Acad-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

emy told the *New York Times* in November 1989:

> If the Governments of Eastern Europe want it, we must withdraw our troops from their territory. We can do this *even unilaterally*. As for American troops—I would leave that up to the Western European Governments. I know that some circles in Western Europe feel their security is greater with American troops. It's an understandable position. Let them have it.

While Soviet policy experimented with successive proposals for a "European security order" to supplant the two alliances, many commentators insisted that preserving a balance of military power made no sense as a Soviet goal. Vyacheslav Dashichev, now perhaps the best-known Soviet diplomatic historian, explained to *Die Welt* in March that the very idea of such a balance was a vestige of the Cold War. The Soviet Union no longer had any expansionist goals, and "as for the threat from the West, nobody believes in the aggressive intentions of that side." In any case, hoping to keep Germany out of NATO was "unrealistic."

Other writers have also dismissed the idea of a German military danger, and even Ambassador Bessmertnykh (then first deputy foreign minister) reassured a Soviet TV audience that Western self-restraint would protect Soviet interests.

> The U.S. Administration understands that in its activities in the East European region it must have an awareness of the boundary which it ought not to cross. What is this boundary and what is it determined by? It is primarily determined by the interests of these states themselves, and these states must also manifest due vigilance and common sense in their relations with all other states. It is determined by the Soviet Union's interests and the interests of other neighboring states and the interests of stability in Europe.

Putting their confidence in the good sense of others, Soviet spokesmen steadily narrowed their definition of what they require in a German settlement. The increasing references to the constraints of public opinion—in a *Pravda* interview, Gorbachev appealed to the Germans to "respect not only the interests but also the *feelings* of other peoples"—may have won some sympathy among poll-conscious Western leaders. At the same time, the suggestion that what Moscow needed was a formula to save face at home clearly weakened its bargaining position.

The Soviet desire to withdraw from military and diplomatic competition is so pronounced that one has to wonder whether the country will stand aloof from competition of all kinds. When Khrushchev said (not quite sincerely) that peaceful coexistence should be considered an ideological contest about which system is better, he certainly meant that the Soviet Union should conduct it vigorously. There are residues of his view in today's debate. Shevardnadze, for example, told the Foreign Ministry in 1988 that "our main national interest" is to show that socialism, by stimulating the highest labor productivity, "provides man more than any other socio-political system." With the usual quotes from Lenin on his side, he actually insisted that Soviet national security be viewed "solely in this connection." The Soviet Union's goal, he said, is to seek "primacy in the intellectual and cultural area, to put our society in the position of world leader in formulating innovative ideas."

Such harmless-sounding sentiments barely seem to qualify as foreign policy objectives, and if they have any practical meaning at all, it is probably to strengthen the case for political and military retrenchment—by identifying a safer, less divisive form of East-West competition. Yet the mood of the contemporary Soviet debate can be measured by the fact that other spokesmen adopt an *even more minimalist* line. For them, if the Soviet Union is going to forswear competition, there should be no escape clauses of any kind. According to Kozyrev, "objectives of economic, ideological or cultural superiority" are known to encourage military adventures, and as such they "undermine confidence." "The

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

entire range of policy and practice" must therefore be scrutinized to make sure it contains absolutely nothing that could be considered provocative. In the same spirit, Malashenko has deflated overly bold official talk about the Soviet Union becoming a real force in the world economy. It will be a long time, he has written, before the Soviet Union is "ready for full-fledged cooperation with the most developed capitalist countries."

The across-the-board minimalism in Soviet thinking about foreign policy was perhaps best captured in an off-hand remark by Aleksandr Yakovlev, Gorbachev's closest ally on the Politburo. "It is beyond my comprehension," he told *Der Spiegel* in January 1989, "why one power should want to be more important than another." Even if somewhat disingenuous, this was a telling aside. In both tone and content, it recalled Henry Kissinger's famous outburst, "What, in the name of God, is strategic superiority?" Both men, trying to find a more sustainable (that is, lesser) national role in the world, threw up their hands in frustration with those who did not understand the evident good sense of their approach, who continued to argue for more ambitious, competitive policies despite their obvious costs and risks.

Pluralism

THE CHANCE to talk openly about the national interest has revealed the Soviet elite's disenchantment not just with past foreign policy but with foreign policy as such. Yet, however radical the discussion, it can hardly be said to have produced a precise new definition of Soviet interests. No matter how many speeches, articles, communiques, and reports one reads, the object of the quest remains elusive.

There are doubtless many reasons for the inconclusiveness of the debate. A full enumeration of national interests is always intellectually difficult and, for that matter, often politically counterproductive. The more precise the definition, the more objections there will be to this or that specific goal. Most important, a fundamental redirection of national policy is not primarily a matter of winning arguments but of winning power. Even if they defeat the old concepts, reformers also have to defeat the old institutions that embody them.

Not surprisingly, then, the search for a Soviet national interest has gone beyond the question of defining it to the question of *who* defines it. In this way, the Soviet experience neatly reenacts the struggle over America's world role that took place during and after the Vietnam War. The lasting impact of that debate was less conceptual than political: it redistributed power over policy between the executive and legislative branches of government, and between the government and pressure groups outside it. Since then, strategic concepts have come and gone, but the diffusion of power within the American system lingers on.

Those who want to institutionalize a more modest set of Soviet external goals know what success depends on. As Malashenko put it in *Kommunist*:

> We will hardly succeed in creating an effective mechanism for protecting our national interests as long as the public does not have a real chance to judge the state of affairs in this area and to participate in open democratic discussion of questions of foreign and military policy.

The national interest, it seems, is what emerges from democratic decision-making. There is a suggestion of the change in Shevardnadze's proposal to "merge science and diplomacy." In the past such a statement would have meant putting Marxist-Leninist theory into practice. Now it means listening to think-tank researchers, op-ed writers, pollsters, and consultants.

The crucial event in the reform of Soviet policy-making was Gorbachev's decision to beef up the powers of the legislature and—even more—to choose its members in elections. Although his report to the 1988 Party Conference, which presented these reforms in detail, hardly mentioned their intended impact on foreign policy, Shevardnadze's

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

subsequent speech to the Foreign Ministry left no doubt that he expected the military to be their principal victim. With obvious relish, he (and his deputy ministers as well) forecast the growth of legislative control over military doctrines, budgets, plans, operations, etc. Past mistakes were ascribed to the secrecy in which decisions, especially military decisions, were made; this would at last be broken.

To judge by public rhetoric alone, the effort has been an astounding success. The onset of electoral politics has given life and legitimacy to anti-military sentiments that had no outlet in earlier phases of glasnost. On the Soviet campaign trail last year, there was no surer applause line than a promise to cut the military budget, and many candidates committed themselves to seek legislation (plainly modeled on the U.S. War Powers Resolution) requiring a congressional vote before troops were sent abroad. This new atmosphere has put military spokesmen at a distinct disadvantage: in presenting the 1990 budget, the deputy defense minister acknowledged that military prestige had reached a low point in Soviet history.

The Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade may have viewed this spectacle with a certain delight, but they too have been subjected to demands for openness and accountability. A typical proposal of the campaign for the new Congress of People's Deputies was that of Genrikh Borovik, chairman of the officially-sponsored Committee for the Defense of Peace, who called for mandatory television coverage of all important decisions—"major diplomatic steps, foreign trade policy, the amount of our aid to other countries, and so on." The closed-door bureaucratic pluralism that had evolved under Gorbachev's predecessors was insufficient, he told a *Nedelya* interviewer in February 1989. It only fostered

> collective irresponsibility and collective indifference. We must get away from anonymity! Precisely because the author of some rash step would know that his name would be associated with that step.

Hustings rhetoric, however, is not the same thing as a working system of checks and balances, and many of the great expectations with which the new legislature was launched have clearly been disappointed. Writing in the liberal magazine *Ogonek*, Georgii Arbatov, the Soviet Union's best-known Americanist and himself a member of the People's Congress, recently complained that the military remains impervious to outside control, including the oversight role of the Supreme Soviet Committee on Defense and State Security.[5] The committee's chairman has echoed this judgment, admitting that he and his colleagues cannot get the ministries to give them the basic information they need.

Even if these problems persist, however, there are other signs of political change. In his March 15 "inaugural address," for example, Gorbachev pledged that he would never send troops abroad without prior legislative authority. His statement was surely designed to keep the "War Powers" bill bottled up in committee and prevent any statutory encroachment on his restyled presidential powers, but the mere need to position himself in this way implied that power is not yet clearly demarcated.

On the issue of foreign aid, there was a similar hint of a political tug of war in Shevardnadze's state-of-the-world report to the Supreme Soviet last October. He described the report itself—intended to be a yearly event—as a sign of growing cooperation between the ministry and the legislature. Yet, in a break with his usual reformist tone, the foreign minister also delivered a stern little lecture to the deputies about the importance of honoring past commitments to friends and allies. Were Moscow abruptly to cut off foreign aid, he said, Soviet credibility would be severely weakened.

These remarks could almost have been lifted from the congressional testimony of an American cabinet secretary worried about possible cuts in his budget and determined to prevent further damage. They were all the

[5] "The Country for the Army—or the Army for the Country?", *Ogonek*, no. 5, February 1990.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

more striking because Shevardnadze has been the most enthusiastic supporter of creating checks and balances in foreign policy-making. That he has now begun to protest the consequences may suggest that they are taking effect. Certainly the official 1990 foreign aid budget showed a substantial drop, from 12 billion rubles to 9.7 billion; and although questions can be raised about what these figures mean, the fact remains that the Soviet leadership chose to advertise a cut two-and-a-half times larger in percentage terms than was made in the military budget—and that the foreign minister publicly complained. Since then, moreover, legislative attention to this issue has not subsided. In March, the Finance Ministry—in response to a legislative request—published the first ever country-by-country breakdown of Third World debts to the Soviet Union, with the admission that many would never be collected. Steady publicity and criticism, it is clear, are robbing foreign aid of its legitimacy.

Reputation and Self-Respect

IN ATTEMPTING to rethink the national interest, Soviet officials and reformers have loudly proclaimed their readiness to defer to foreign opinion. As Shevardnadze told his staff two years ago,

> We cannot simply pretend that the norms and ideas of what is proper, of what is called civilized conduct in the world community, do not concern us. If you want to be accepted in it, you have to observe them.

The circle of those entitled to a role in identifying interests has, in effect, been widened yet again. It now includes not only those inside the Soviet Union who did not have a real say in the past, but the institutions, individuals, and mores of the outside world.

The new importance of external authority is the flip side of what is often described as the Soviet campaign to "deprive the West of its enemy." Unquestionably, a negative image of the Soviet Union helped to sustain Western policy during the Cold War. But overcoming that image does more than constrain the West; it constrains the Soviet Union too. For Shevardnadze, reputation is "a component of state interests and national security." And if a nation's reputation counts, its freedom of action narrows.

Not everyone agrees about exactly *why* international respectability matters. For some writers and officials, reputation has a largely instrumental value: it makes Soviet diplomacy more effective. In this spirit Vyacheslav Dashichev and other scholars have argued that the purges of the 1930s so "blackened" the Soviet Union's image that an alliance with the West against Hitler was out of the question. The Foreign Ministry's Andrei Kozyrev has linked "trust" with the attempt to strike a workable "balance of interests": a government that enjoys the confidence of other states will be able to persuade them to moderate their own goals and to resolve disputes by compromise.

By strengthening respect for foreign opinion, Soviet reformers also expect to simplify their work at home. Anatoly Adamishin, one of Shevardnadze's deputy ministers, wrote in a recent issue of *Moscow News* that the ability to draw on the West's legal tradition is "an essential part of our domestic reform process."

> It means we do not have to invent things. More often than not we can simply borrow existing legal norms and, if necessary, adjust them to our reality. These norms have been elaborated in the West with the utmost care and thoroughness.

The Foreign Ministry's 1989 report to the Supreme Soviet showed what it means for external commitments to become a factor in domestic politics. The report grumbled that the new legislature had not yet carried out Gorbachev's year-old promise to the UN of new laws on religion and freedom of the press. It also presented a list of internationally-recognized rights not yet codified in Soviet legislation, and complained about the failure

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to live up to commitments to improve environmental policy and psychiatric practices. In this document and elsewhere, appeals to outside standards are routinely put forward to sway internal debate. When the Supreme Soviet considered the new emigration law this spring, the argument of the bill's floor manager, Fedor Burlatsky, was that final passage would increase the Soviet Union's "prestige."

Beyond making diplomacy more effective or speeding reform at home, a final element of the new Soviet readiness to accept the judgments of the world community is the most revealing of all. In the course of his 1988 speech to the Foreign Ministry, Shevardnadze paused to acknowledge that some people felt too much attention was being paid to what foreigners said about the Soviet Union. In the light of Soviet traditions, his reply was astonishing: "our self-respect," he said, depends on it.

Western scholars and diplomats have long spoken of a Soviet inferiority complex—rooted in the country's miserable living standards, in the peasant origins of many officials, in shame at the brutality of Stalinism, and in embarrassment at the preposterous rituals of an ideologized society. The analysis, if vague, had a certain plausibility, and yet anyone weighing it also had to deal with Soviet claims to have created a completely new culture and a superior morality. If the self-respect of "New Soviet Man" depended on the approval of foreigners, he certainly never admitted it. And when Soviet propaganda spoke, as it did ceaselessly, of the Soviet Union's "immense prestige" throughout the world, the boast was far from an acknowledgment that Moscow had to measure up to outside standards. The very assertion of Soviet "prestige" (often followed by a phrase like "in the eyes of peace-loving peoples everywhere") was meant as a rebuke to the West.

Now this psychological autarky has collapsed. The rhetoric of "common human values" may cushion the blow a bit, by offering a new—and for some, inspiring—universalism in place of the old one. This is why talk of "Western values" is so irritating to Gorbachev, and why he reportedly spent so much time at the Malta summit trying to convince President Bush that such ideas are not Western at all, but the birthright of all mankind.

Yet, such protests aside, the deference to outside opinion parallels the broader Soviet rethinking of the national interest. The idea that the Soviet Union can live by its own moral standards has about as much support as the idea that it can remain a military superpower. According to Andrei Kortunov, "the theme of repentance" must acquire a place in Soviet foreign policy. "We must see ourselves," as Nikolai Popov wrote in *Literaturnaya Gazeta* last year, "through the eyes of others."

This effort is in its way humiliating, but its advocates accentuate the positive. No one is more upbeat than Shevardnadze, whose UN speech last fall again described the progress of Soviet policy in the language of self-esteem. "The Soviet Union," he declared, "feels more comfortable in the international arena than ever before."

Gorbachev's Gaullist Alternative

THE SEARCH for a Soviet national interest has so far been conducted largely by process of elimination. Whatever costs too much, whatever is too risky or confrontational, whatever is decided in secret, whatever weakens Soviet prestige, whatever gets in the way of perestroika—whatever falls into these categories is *not* in the national interest. A Soviet citizen might be forgiven for asking whether the leaders of his country have stumbled upon the idea of the national interest only to discover that they do not have one.

The term has, of course, been used as a principle of exclusion in other countries as well. Despite an affinity with *realpolitik*, "national interest" is often the rallying cry of a skeptical near-isolationism that asks of events elsewhere, what concern are they of mine?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Many who employ the term in American debate do so precisely to restrain what they see as over-reaching.[6]

Yet the fact that a bare-minimum foreign policy has its advocates in both the U.S. and the USSR does not make it equally palatable in both countries. Americans are now considering a scaled-back world role, but without the sting of defeat. The record of Soviet foreign policy in the past several years, by contrast, makes discussion of the national interest look like a feeble attempt to paper over poor results.

This suspicion had its most famous expression in the speech of the Soviet ambassador to Poland (a former *apparatchik* serving in diplomatic exile) at the February 1990 plenum of the Central Committee:

> Our country, our mother, has been reduced to a poor condition and has been turned from a power admired in the world into a state with a mistaken past, a joyless present, and an uncertain future. . . . Yet we are trying to present all this as a dizzying success for perestroika and new thinking in international affairs.

Ambassador Brovikov's outburst should not be over-interpreted. He was not, it seems, acting as the spokesman of an organized challenge to Gorbachev's foreign policy (and has since lost his job). Yet he clearly did not speak for himself alone. Similar complaints have been heard from representatives of most other institutions of the Soviet system. The senior military leadership, in particular, has continued to warn of the external military threat facing the Soviet Union. In *Literaturnaya Rossiya*, one widely-read pro-military writer, Aleksandr Prokhanov, describes the impact of "new thinking" as "neglect of the interests of the socialist state and satisfaction of the ambitions of imperialist oligarchies." In the Third World, he writes, the effect is especially severe:

> The Soviet Union, weak and displaced from the regions of the world, can no longer serve as a restraining factor to the expansion of bourgeois empires. A multitude of small countries and peoples who have derived advantage from the recent stand-off are obediently running to Washington's call like mice after the Pied Piper.

Creating support for a national interest in retreat is hard enough. The problem is compounded by liberal reformers' extreme deference to foreign views; hence the complaints, also voiced at the February plenum, about truckling to traditional adversaries like Pope John Paul II. Many who worry about such developments—and they are not limited to the Communist old guard—focus on the internal impact of the Soviet Union's falling status. A manifesto drawn up last year by a Russian nationalist faction in the Congress of People's Deputies lamented the "decline of superpower patriotism among our youth."[7]

Even the increased pluralism that Gorbachev has brought to the making of foreign policy creates problems. In two regions that loom especially large in Soviet calculations—the Middle East and Central Europe—public opinion and the openness of debate often seem to narrow Soviet flexibility rather than widen it. Soviet-Israeli rapprochement has been complicated by the hostility to Israel (which they are now quite free to express) of both Russian nationalists and Islamic fundamentalists. In similar fashion, Moscow's credibility on the German question has been eroded by self-described "advisers to Gorbachev" who confidently tell Western journalists that tough Soviet positions on the future of Germany are only for show.[8]

Witnessing all this, many in the West have begun to doubt the staying power of a

---

[6]Charles William Maynes uses the term this way in his Spring 1990 *Foreign Policy* article, "America without the Cold War." For him, a policy based on "strict national interest"—not his preference—would sharply reduce U.S. engagement in most of the world.

[7]Bill Keller, "Russian Nationalists: Yearning for an Iron Hand," *New York Times Magazine*, January 28, 1990, p. 50.

[8]Seeing the effect on Soviet bargaining strength, the Foreign Ministry in April took the unusual step of announcing that one of the most provocative Soviet commentators on Germany, Vyacheslav Dashichev, had no role in preparing policy.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Soviet conception of the national interest that is so closely associated with failure. The very term "national interest" has been a minor rhetorical fraud, pressed into service by Gorbachev and Shevardnadze to give a hard nationalist edge to what is in reality the soft accommodationist agenda of Soviet reformers. In the West their program would be called liberal internationalist: an anti-imperial, anti-military drive that puts trade above politics and threatens to submerge individual states in supranational structures. Because this program is unpopular wherever nationalism is strong—and because the Soviet Union will benefit only slowly from trying to integrate itself into such a world order—there is every reason to speculate about a coming Soviet backlash. If Gorbachev is playing the role of Carter, won't someone eventually play Reagan? If we are now dealing with Weimar Russia, how long will it be before National Bolshevism bursts on the scene?

The problem with these analogies—America in the 1980s, Germany in the 1930s—is that they presume a revival of national strength that is extremely hard to credit in the Soviet case. In 1930, despite massive unemployment, the Weimar Republic had the largest economy in Europe; post-Vietnam America, despite inflation and energy dependence, had the largest in the world. In each case, nationalist leaders who wanted to pursue a more ambitious, less compromising policy toward the outside world had a great deal to work with.

The Soviet Union, by contrast, faces a long stretch of hard times. It therefore makes little sense to ask whether its leaders will not be tempted to throw off the constraints that have marked Gorbachev's foreign policy—as though their problems could be solved by wishing them away. They cannot be, and this fact is understood across the entire Soviet political spectrum. The opening up of the system has revealed extremism of many kinds, but—and this is very important—*no Soviet irredentism*. (By contrast, in Weimar, everyone was irredentist. The foreign policy debate was about how, not whether, to overturn the Versailles settlement.)

IN THE SOVIET Union, the Soviet national interest will almost certainly continue to be defined as a search for relief from burdens, and for ways of buffering the transition to a diminished world role. Liberal accommodationism, which has to date dominated discussion of the Soviet national interest, is one version of this search. Are there alternatives that could, without requiring resources that are needed elsewhere, claim a better fit with the needs of a post-imperial medium power? History suggests one: Gaullism. For France in the 1950s and 1960s it was an attempt to slow the rapid loss of international influence, to insulate diplomacy from the confusions of domestic politics, and to make national pride a support for sovereignty. These themes have an obvious relevance to the Soviet Union's scaled-down national interest—to the minimalism that leaves Moscow seemingly without a role, to the pluralism that makes policy appear incoherent and confused, and to a dependence on the approval of outsiders that many find distasteful. To address these shortcomings, the Soviet Union may move toward what Fritz Stern a decade ago called "Gaullism by default. . . an improvised, depressed adaptation to unfavorable circumstances."[9]

There are already signs, for example, of Soviet second thoughts about one of the most sacred themes of "new thinking": abolishing nuclear weapons. One influential Soviet analyst, Sergei Karaganov, has written in *Moscow News* of "a definite temporary increase of psychological—certainly not military—reliance on the nuclear factor in our security." Others have echoed him, and while no one is

[9]See "Germany in a Semi-Gaullist Europe," *Foreign Affairs* 58 (Spring 1980): 873. Stern was referring to Western Europe's drift away from U.S. leadership in the Carter years. It could be argued that his description applies even to de Gaulle's own Gaullism.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

prepared for an open challenge to the idea of a nuclear-free world, the mere expression of doubt is significant. It suggests an attempt to think through the break-up of the Soviet military position in Central Europe. Liberal reformers and military planners seem to be coming to the same conclusion. For liberals, nuclear weapons can be the key to reducing the size of the army—and its internal political influence. For the military, nuclear weapons ease the loss of conventional advantages over the West. They provide the *force de frappe* that every retreating medium power needs.

Gaullist diplomacy suggests other patterns that the Soviet Union may follow. French capabilities permitted no more than a relatively weak challenge to the East-West alliance system, but de Gaulle did achieve a kind of diplomatic reinsurance by building special relationships with Bonn and Moscow. And although withdrawal from Algeria meant abandoning the empire for good, French leaders nevertheless protected a residual role in the Third World, especially in Francophone Africa.

Soviet Gaullism would mean a like-minded attempt to find political advantage at the margin, despite tight limits on what Moscow can hope to accomplish. A special understanding with Germany has no real prospect of supplanting the much more important German connection with the U.S., but it would supplement the weak security guarantees likely to issue from the all-European negotiations that Soviet officials say they want. In the same way, a much reduced presence in the Third World would have very little strategic rationale, but it would symbolize the generic ideological commitment that Gorbachev, with some defensiveness, expressed in his inaugural address:

> The policy of new thinking by no means signifies a cooling of our interest in the developing countries, as some people try to present it, both inside our country and beyond its borders. Our solidarity with those who are fighting for equal rights, for social progress, democracy and a life that is worthy of man is immutable.

De Gaulle's partners found him exasperating; Gorbachev's find him captivating, but a little self-regarding Gaullist amoralism could change that. The current Soviet enthusiasm for multilateral problem-solving—UN peacekeeping forces, negotiated limits on arms exports, and the like—may encounter some of the same temptations that led France to assist Israel's nuclear weapons program. Cash-strapped and cutting back on defense, the Soviet Union will have good Gaullist reasons to keep increasing hard currency military sales to the Third World.

French Gaullism had as much to do with the making of policy as with its actual content. To a political system foundering in multi-party confusion, the advent of de Gaulle meant presidential leadership. Now that Gorbachev has created the same office for himself (justified by frequent references to the French model), he will begin to show whether he really intends to open up the institutions responsible for foreign and defense policy. Many Western analysts have concluded that the political influence of the military is growing; this ought to mean that, as president, Gorbachev will avoid confrontation with his generals and shield them from anti-military sentiment in the media and legislature. Yet the evidence of his inaugural address is different. Its strong statement that the time had come for "profound military reform" suggested that he is preparing another challenge to the military leadership. (De Gaulle, it might be remembered, ruled for a time with emergency powers—to put down a military coup and cope with its aftermath.)

Of the many strands of Gaullism, the one that may carry the most perplexing message for Gorbachev is the reassertion of national pride. The Soviet effort to win international respectability has been hugely successful, but at home it appears to be the least popular theme of foreign policy. Perhaps as a result, there are now the first signs of an attempt to give Soviet policy a more credible nationalist appearance—primarily by co-opting figures who are popular in the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Russian nationalist movement into the new Presidential Council.

Whether or not this effort continues, linking patriotism and foreign policy will surely be the hardest part of creating a workable Soviet Gaullism. The multinational make-up of the Soviet state does not by itself mean that a coherent national interest is impossible, but it will make it extremely difficult to bolster the defense of that interest with appeals to national pride. If so, Gorbachev may have to settle for (again quoting Fritz Stern) Gaullism "without grandeur"—a formula that is, in any case, much truer to the revolution he has made in Soviet politics. He has sought to overcome a hated, fearful past, not evoke a grand one; and to deny, rather than assert, a special calling in world affairs.

Everyone knows that Churchill said: "I cannot forecast to you the action of Russia. It is a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma." Hardly anyone recalls that he continued: "But perhaps there is a key. That key is Russian national interest."

For Churchill, as for many others, the "national interest" provided a fixed point by which statesmen could steer. Its origins lay in a given nation's geography and history and in the competitiveness of the international system. Its dictates were moderation (because overcommitment to ideological or personal goals can put the nation at risk) and self-assertion (because any slackening can jeopardize its security). As a forecast of Soviet conduct, this meant that Moscow would probably take no extreme risks for the sake of world revolution, but also that there was no serious prospect of an end to the rivalry between East and West. The imperatives of empire were much too great.

In the hands of new Soviet leaders, the "national interest" has lost its objective character, its seeming permanence. What Gorbachev, Shevardnadze, and their colleagues have found under the rubble of Leninism is not some some Palmerstonian mandate to protect the Soviet Union's global position at all costs. They have discovered that the reconsideration of their external strategy can be just as radical as the reform of their internal order and is indeed inseparable from it. "National interest" may be the key, but it is a key they make—and now, remake—themselves.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

From Geopolitics to Geo-Economics

Logic of Conflict, Grammar of Commerce

Edward N. Luttwak

EXCEPT FOR THOSE unfortunate parts of the world where armed confrontations or civil strife persist for purely regional or internal reasons, the waning of the Cold War is steadily reducing the importance of military power in world affairs.

True, in the central strategic arena, where Soviet power finally encountered the *de facto* coalition of Americans, Europeans, Japanese, and Chinese, existing military forces have diminished very little so far. Nevertheless, as a Soviet-Western war becomes ever more implausible, the ability to threaten or reassure is equally devalued (and by the same token, of course, there is no longer a unifying threat to sustain the coalition against all divisive impulses). Either way, the deference that armed strength could evoke in the dealings of governments over all matters—notably including economic questions—has greatly declined, and seems set to decline further.

Everyone, it appears, now agrees that the methods of commerce are displacing military methods—with disposable capital in lieu of firepower, civilian innovation in lieu of military-technical advancement, and market penetration in lieu of garrisons and bases. But these are all tools, not purposes; what purposes will they serve?

Edward N. Luttwak holds the Burke Chair in Strategy at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, D.C.

If the players left in the field by the waning importance of military power were purely economic entities—labor-sellers, entrepreneurs, corporations—then only the logic of commerce would govern world affairs. Instead of World Politics, the intersecting web of power relationships on the international scene, we would simply have World Business, a myriad of economic interactions spanning the globe. In some cases, the logic of commerce would result in fierce competition. In others, the same logic would lead to alliances between economic entities in any location to capitalize ventures, vertically integrate, horizontally co-develop, co-produce, or co-market goods and services. But competitively or cooperatively, *the action on all sides would always unfold without regard to frontiers.*

If that were to happen, not only military methods but the logic of conflict itself—which is adversarial, zero-sum, and paradoxical—would be displaced. This, or something very much like it, is in fact what many seem to have in mind when they speak of a new global interdependence and its beneficial consequences.[1]

[1]The logic of conflict is "zero-sum" since the gain of one side is the loss of the other, and vice versa. That is so in war, in geopolitical confrontations short of war, and in oligopolistic competition (as the market share of one oligopolist can only increase at the expense of another's); but not in a many-sided ("perfect")

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Logic and Grammar

BUT THINGS are not quite that simple. The international scene is still primarily occupied by states and blocs of states that extract revenues, regulate economic as well as other activities for various purposes, pay out benefits, offer services, provide infrastructures, and—of increasing importance—finance or otherwise sponsor the development of new technologies and new products. As territorial entities, spatially rather than functionally defined, states cannot follow a commercial logic that would ignore their own boundaries.

What logic then do they follow?

- Do they seek to collect as much in revenues as their fiscal codes prescribe—or are they content to let other states or blocs of states tax away what they themselves could obtain? Since the former is the reality (that is, a zero-sum situation in which the gain of one is the loss of another), here the ruling logic is the logic of conflict.
- Do they regulate economic activities to achieve disinterestedly transnational purposes—or do they seek to maximize outcomes within their own boundaries, even if this means that the outcomes are suboptimal elsewhere? Since the latter is the predominant, if not exclusive, reality, economic regulation is as much a tool of statecraft as military defenses ever were. Hence, insofar as external repercussions are considered, the logic of state regulation is *in part* the logic of conflict. As such, its attributes include the typically warlike use of secrecy and deception for the sake of surprise (as, for example, when product standards are first defined in secret consultations with domestic producers, long before their public enunciation).
- Do states and blocs of states pay out benefits and offer services transnationally—or (fractional aid allocations apart) do they strive to restrict such advantages to their own residents? Likewise, do they design infrastructures to maximize their transnational utility—or do they aim for domestically optimal and appropriately competitive configurations, regardless of how others are affected? Since the latter is the reality, the logic of state action is again *in part* the logic of conflict. (The competitive building of huge international airports in adjacent, minuscule, Persian Gulf sheikhdoms is an extreme example of such behavior, but such conduct is not uncommon in milder forms.)
- Finally, do states and blocs of states promote technological innovation for its own sake—or do they seek thereby to maximize benefits within their own boundaries? Since the latter is the reality, the logic of conflict

---

competition, wherein any two sides can both gain (or lose) market shares concurrently. The logic of conflict is paradoxical (i.e., governed by apparent contradictions and the coincidence of opposites) because all actions unfold in the presence of an adversary that reacts against whatever is being done. That is why—to give a static example—the worst of approach roads for an attack may be the best, if it confers the advantage of surprise (making the bad road paradoxically good and the good road paradoxically bad). Or, to give a dynamic example—involving the coincidence of opposites—why victorious armies that advance too far advance to their own defeat by overextension, just as weapons that are too effective are the most likely to be made ineffectual by the enemy countermeasures that their very effectiveness evokes. This same dynamic evolution toward the coincidence of opposites is operative at every level of strategy: thus the Soviet Union's accumulation of power eventually resulted in its impotence, as other states were frightened into forming a coalition against Moscow. In all dynamic manifestations of the logic of conflict there is such a culminating point, beyond which actions evolve into their opposite. In the linear logic of everyday life (and economic competition), by contrast, good is good and bad is bad, and success can facilitate further success without any necessary culminating point. For a systematic comparison, see my *Strategy: the Logic of War and Peace* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

applies. (Three obvious examples are the obstacles that long delayed the introduction of Concorde flights into U.S. airports, Japanese barriers against U.S. supercomputers and telecommunications, and the development of rival High Definition Television formats.)

As this is how things are, it follows that—even if we leave aside the persistence of armed confrontations in unfortunate parts of the world and wholly disregard what remains of the Cold War—World Politics is still not about to give way to World Business, i.e., the free interaction of commerce governed only by its own nonterritorial logic.

Instead, what is going to happen—and what we are already witnessing—is a much less complete transformation of state action represented by the emergence of "Geo-economics." This neologism is the best term I can think of to describe the admixture of the logic of conflict with the methods of commerce—or, as Clausewitz would have written, the logic of war in the grammar of commerce.

The Nature of the Beast

WITH STATES and blocs of states still in existence, it could not be otherwise. As spatial entities structured to jealously delimit their own territories, to assert their exclusive control within them, and variously to attempt to influence events beyond their borders, states are inherently inclined to strive for relative advantage against like entities on the international scene, even if only by means other than force.

Moreover, states are subject to the internal impulses of their own bureaucracies, whose officials compete to achieve whatever goals define bureaucratic success, including goals in the international economic arena that may as easily be conflictual as competitive or cooperative. Actually much more than that is happening: *As bureaucracies writ large, states are themselves impelled by the bureaucratic urges of role-preservation and role-enhancement to acquire a "geo-economic" substitute for their decaying geo-political role.*

There is also a far more familiar phenomenon at work: the instrumentalization of the state by economic interest groups that seek to manipulate its activities on the international scene for their own purposes, often by requiring adversarial "geo-economic" stances. No sphere of state action is immune: fiscal policy can be profitably used so as to place imports at a disadvantage; regulations, benefits, services, and infrastructures can all be configured to favor domestic interests in various ways; and, of course, the provision of state funds for domestic technological development is inherently discriminatory against unassisted foreign competitors.

The incidence of both adversarial bureaucratic impulses and adversarial manipulations of the state by interest groups will vary greatly from country to country. But fundamentally, states will tend to act "geo-economically" simply because of what they are: spatially-defined entities structured to outdo each other on the world scene. For all the other functions that states have acquired as providers of individual benefits, assorted services, and varied infrastructures, their *raison d'etre* and the ethos that sustains them still derive from their chronologically first function: to provide security from foes without (as well as outlaws within).

Relatively few states have had to fight to exist, but all states exist to fight—or at least they are structured as if that were their dominant function. Even though most of the existing 160-odd independent states have never fought any external wars, and most of those that have fought have not done so for generations, the governing structures of the modern state are still heavily marked by conflictual priorities, the need to prepare for, or to wage, interstate conflict. In how many major countries does the Minister for Telecommunications, or Energy, or Trade outrank the Defense Minister? Only—appropriately enough—in Japan, where Defense (*Boecho*) is a *Cho* or lesser department (translated as agency), as opposed to a *Sho* or

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ministry, as in *Tsusansho*, the Ministry of Trade. The *Boecho*'s head, while a minister, does not hold cabinet rank.

It is true, of course, that, under whatever name, "geo-economics" has always been an important aspect of international life. In the past, however, the outdoing of others in the realm of commerce was overshadowed by strategic priorities and strategic modalities. Externally, if the logic of conflict dictated the necessity for cooperation against a common enemy while, in contrast, the logic of commerce dictated competition, the preservation of the alliance was almost always given priority. (That indeed is how all the commercial quarrels between the United States and Western Europe—over frozen chickens, microchips, beef, and the rest—and between the United States and Japan—from textiles in the 1960s to supercomputers in the 1980s—were so easily contained during the past decades of acute Soviet-Western confrontation. As soon as commercial quarrels became noisy enough to attract the attention of political leaders on both sides, they were promptly suppressed by those leaders—often by paying off all parties—before they could damage political relations and thus threaten the imperative of strategic cooperation.) Internally, insofar as national cohesion was sustained against divisive social and economic tensions by the unifying urgencies of external antagonisms, it was armed conflict or the threat of it—not commercial animosities—that best served to unite nations.

NOW, HOWEVER, as the relevance of military threats and military alliances wanes, geo-economic priorities and modalities are becoming dominant in state action. Trade quarrels may still be contained by the fear of the economic consequences of an action-reaction cycle of punitive measures, but they will no longer simply be suppressed by political interventions on both sides, urgently motivated by the strategic imperative of preserving alliance cooperation against a common enemy. And if internal cohesion has to be preserved by a unifying threat, that threat must now be economic. Such a reordering of modalities is already fully manifest in the expressed attitudes of other Europeans to the new undivided Germany, and even more so in American attitudes toward Japan. Gorbachev's redirection of Soviet foreign policy had barely started when Japan began to be promoted to the role of the internally unifying Chief Enemy, judging by the evidence of opinion polls, media treatments, advertisements, and congressional pronouncements.

Should we conclude from all this that the world is regressing to a new age of mercantilism? Is that what "geo-economics" identifies, quite redundantly? Not so. The goal of mercantilism was to maximize gold stocks, whereas the goal of geo-economics (aggrandizement of the state aside) could only be to provide the best possible employment for the largest proporion of the population. In the past, moreover, when commercial quarrels evolved into political quarrels, they could become military confrontations almost automatically; and in turn military confrontations could readily lead to war.

In other words, mercantilism was a *subordinated modality*, limited and governed by the ever-present possibility that the loser in the mercantilist (or simply commercial) competition would switch to the grammar of war. Spain might decree that all trade to and from its American colonies could only travel in Spanish bottoms through Spanish ports, but British and Dutch armed merchantmen could still convey profitable cargoes to disloyal colonists in defiance of Spanish sloops; and, with war declared, privateers could seize outright the even more profitable cargoes bound for Spain. Likewise, the Dutch sent their frigates into the Thames to reply to the mercantilist legislation of the British Parliament that prohibited their cabotage, just as much earlier the Portuguese had sunk Arab ships with which they could not compete in the India trade.

"Geo-economics," on the other hand, is emerging in a world where there is *no superior modality*. Import-restricted supercomputers

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cannot be forcibly delivered by airborne assault to banks or universities in need of them, nor can competition in the world automobile market be assisted by the sinking of export car ferries on the high seas. That force has lost the role it once had in the age of mercantilism—as an *admissible* adjunct to economic competition—is obvious enough. But of course the decay of the military grammar of geopolitics is far more pervasive than this, even if it is by no means universal.[2]

Students of international relations may still be taught to admire the classic forms of *realpolitik*, with its structure of anticipatory calculations premised on the feasibility of war. But for some decades now the dominant elites of the greatest powers have ceased to consider war as a practical solution for military confrontations between them, because non-nuclear fighting would only be inconclusively interrupted by the fear of nuclear war, while the latter is self-inhibiting. (In accordance with the always paradoxical logic of conflict, the application of the fusion technique meant that nuclear weapons exceeded the culminating point of utility, becoming less useful as they became more efficient.)

For exactly the same reason, military confrontations were themselves still considered very much worth pursuing—and rightly so, for war was thereby precluded throughout the decades of Soviet-Western antagonism. More recently, however, the dominant elites of the greatest powers appear to have concluded that military confrontations between them are only dissuasive of threats that are themselves most implausible. It is that new belief that has caused the decisive devaluation of military strength as an instrument of statecraft in the direct relations of the greatest powers.

Hence, while the methods of mercantilism could always be dominated by the methods of war, in the new "geo-economic" era not only the *causes* but also the *instruments* of conflict must be economic. If commercial quarrels do lead to political clashes, as they are now much more likely to do with the waning of the imperatives of geopolitics, those political clashes must be fought out with the weapons of commerce: the more or less disguised restriction of imports, the more or less concealed subsidization of exports, the funding of competitive technology projects, the support of selected forms of education, the provision of competitive infrastructures, and more.

Playing the New Game

THE DISCUSSION so far has focused on the actual and prospective role of states and, by implication, of blocs of states engaged in "geo-economic" conduct. But what happens on the world economic scene will not of course be defined by such conduct; indeed the role of "geo-economics" in the doings and undoings of the world economy should be far smaller than the role of geopolitics in world politics as a whole.

First, the propensity of states to act geo-economically will vary greatly, even more than their propensity to act geopolitically. For reasons historical and institutional, or doctrinal and political, some states will maintain a strictly *laissez faire* attitude,

[2]In the train of history, the last wagons, such as the fragile states of sub-Saharan Africa, are still prebellic: they cannot yet wage war on each other, because regimes sustained only by the direct force of their armies cannot send those armies away to remote frontiers. The wagons at the head of the train by contrast are now postbellic because their ruling elites have become convinced that they cannot usefully fight one another. Only the wagons in the middle—countries such as India, Israel, Iran, Iraq, and a few others—are still capable of war with each other. But of course the train of history can not only stop but reverse its direction: in the second century B.C. the Romans already categorized prebellic societies (tribes too loosely organized to resist them) and advanced postbellic societies (of the Hellenized east) for which war could not be profitable. Things changed.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

simply refusing to act "geo-economically." Both the very prosperous and the very poor might be in that category, just as both Switzerland and Burma have long been geopolitically inactive. In other cases, the desirable scope of geo-economic activism by the state is already becoming a focal point of political debate and partisan controversy: witness the current Democratic-Republican dispute on "industrial policy" in the United States. In still other cases, such as that of France, the dominant elites that long insisted on a very ambitious degree of geopolitical activism (ambitious, that is, in terms of the resources available) are now easily shifting their emphasis to demand much more geo-economic activism from the French state. And then, of course, there are the states—Japan most notably—whose geo-economic propensities are not in question.

Second, there is the much more important limitation that states and blocs of states acting "geo-economically" must do so within an arena that is not exclusively theirs, in which they coexist with private economic operators large and small, from individuals to the largest multinational corporations. While states occupy virtually all of the world's political space, they occupy only a fraction of the total economic space, and global political-economic trends such as privatization are reducing that fraction even further. (On the other hand, the role of states is increasing precisely in the economic sectors whose importance is itself increasing, sectors defined by the commercial application of the most advanced technologies.)

Of the different forms of coexistence between geo-economically active states and private economic operators, there is no end. Coexistence can be passive and disregarded, as in the relationship (or lack of it) between the state and the myriad of small, localized service businesses. With neither wanting anything from the other—except for the taxes that the fiscal authorities demand—the two can simply coexist without interacting or communicating.

At the opposite extreme, there is the intense positive interaction between politically weighty businesses in need of state support on the world economic scene, and the bureaucracies or politicians that they seek to manipulate for their own purposes. Or, going the other way, there is the equally intense and equally positive interaction that occurs when states seek to guide large companies for their own geo-economic purposes, or even select them as their "chosen instrument" (a specialized form of coexistence that dates back at least to the seventeenth-century East India companies, Dutch and Danish as well as, most famously, British).

Even more common, no doubt, are the cases of reciprocal manipulation, most notably in the remarkably uniform dealings of the largest international oil companies—whether American, British, or French—with their respective (and otherwise very different) state authorities. In each case, the state has been both user and used, and the companies both instruments and instrumentalizers.

Negative state-private sector interactions are not likely to be common, but they could be very important when they do occur. Geo-economically active states that oppose rival foreign states will also obviously oppose private foreign companies that are the chosen instruments of those rivals, as well as private foreign companies that simply have the misfortune to stand in the way. An era of intense "geo-economic" activity might thus become an era of unprecedented risk for important private companies in important sectors. If they invest Y million of their funds to develop X technology, they may find themselves irremediably overtaken by the X project of country Z, funded by the taxpayer in the amount of 2Y million, or 20Y million for that matter. Or private companies may find themselves competing with foreign undercutters determined to drive them out of business, and amply funded for that purpose by their state authorities. As public funding for such purposes is likely to be concealed, a victim-company may enter a market quite unaware of its fatal disadvantage. In such diverse ways the international economy will be pervasively

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

affected by that fraction of its life that is geo-economic rather than simply economic in character (just as in the past the geopolitical activity of the few greatest powers decisively conditioned the politics of the many).

Perhaps the pan-Western trade accords of the era of armed confrontation with the Soviet Union—based on the original General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade—may survive without the original impulse that created them, and may serve to inhibit the overt use of tariffs and quotas as the geo-economic equivalent of fortified lines. And that inheritance of imposed amity may also dissuade the hostile use of all other "geo-economic" weapons, from deliberate regulatory impediments to customs-house conspiracies aimed at rejecting imports covertly—the commercial equivalents of the ambushes of war. But that still leaves room for far more important weapons: the competitive development of commercially important new technologies, the predatory financing of their sales during their embryonic stage, and the manipulation of the standards that condition their use—the geo-economic equivalents of the offensive campaigns of war.

Today, there is a palpably increasing tension between the inherently conflictual nature of states (and blocs of states) and the intellectual recognition of many of their leaders and citizens that while war is a zero-sum encounter by nature, commercial relations need not be and indeed rarely have been. The outcome of that tension within the principal countries and blocs will determine the degree to which we will live in a geo-economic world.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Read the magazine that shapes the minds of the people who shape our world.

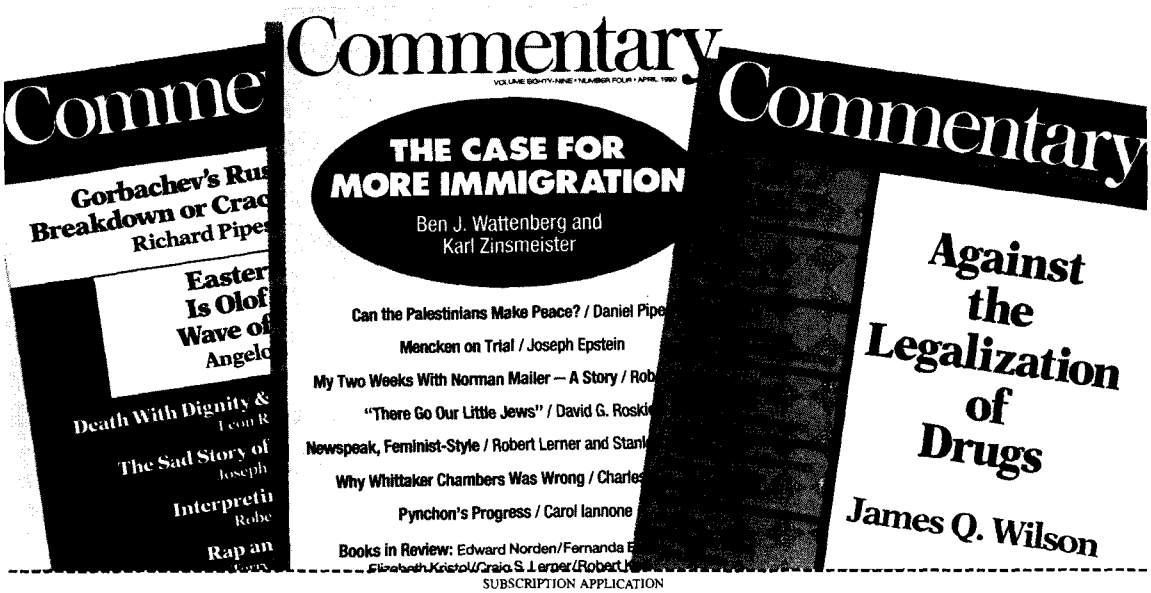
Discover for yourself the excitement of exploring today's most critical topics with today's most articulate and influential writers and thinkers. Subscribe to Commentary, the magazine that has illuminated every aspect of America's political, social, and cultural life. The magazine for those who take the world, and their role in it, very seriously.

Commentary
The forum for today's most vital issues.

"COMMENTARY is very, very important for the life of the United States, for the West, and, I am convinced, for freedom."
–HON. JEANE KIRKPATRICK

"The affirmation of the West and its values, which was there in the first lines Norman Podhoretz wrote as Editor of COMMENTARY, has never faltered and has hugely strengthened both the West and those values."
–SENATOR DANIEL P. MOYNIHAN

"Norman Podhoretz and COMMENTARY have ennobled this society. They have asked the right questions. They have usually given the right answers."
–HON. HENRY A. KISSINGER


Commentary
VOLUME EIGHTY-NINE • NUMBER FOUR • APRIL 1990
THE CASE FOR MORE IMMIGRATION
Ben J. Wattenberg and Karl Zinsmeister
Can the Palestinians Make Peace? / Daniel Pipe
Mencken on Trial / Joseph Epstein
My Two Weeks With Norman Mailer – A Story / Rob
"There Go Our Little Jews" / David G. Roskie
Newspeak, Feminist-Style / Robert Lerner and Stanl
Why Whittaker Chambers Was Wrong / Charles
Pynchon's Progress / Carol Iannone
Books in Review: Edward Norden/Fernanda
Commentary
Against the Legalization of Drugs
James Q. Wilson

SUBSCRIPTION APPLICATION

Commentary
165 East 56th Street, New York, NY 10022

☐ Yes! Please enter my one-year subscription–12 monthly issues–to Commentary for just $39–a full $6 off the newsstand rate. Add $8 for foreign and Canadian subscriptions (U.S. dollars only).

Must reading for today's best informed people.

Name _____ (Please Print)
Address _____
City _____
State _____ Zip _____
Signature _____

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Death of the Third Way

Everywhere But Here, That Is

Seymour Martin Lipset

WHILE THE attention of the world has focused on the startling transformations in the communist world, equally important if less dramatic changes have been taking place in the noncommunist parties of the Left in the industrialized democracies. Although hardly revolutionary, these changes have great ideological significance, for they represent a decisive withdrawal from centralizing and redistributionist doctrines on the part of the democratic Left. In country after country during the last decade, socialist and other left-wing parties have taken the road back to capitalism.

The one major exception to this global movement to the right is provided by our own left-of-center party, the Democrats. Why is the story of recent ideological and programmatic shifts in the other industrialized countries—from Sweden to New Zealand, from Japan to France—so different from what has happened on the Left in the United States? How can the difference be explained?*

I. The Comparative Story: The Left Moves Right

In a process that began with the ideological changes by the German Social Democrats in their Bad Godesberg platform in 1959 and accelerated greatly during the last decade, almost all overseas parties of the Left have explicitly reversed their traditional advocacy of state ownership and domination of the economy. Today these parties openly espouse the virtues of the market economy, of tax reduction, even of monetarism and deregulation. Many emphasize that increased productivity, rather than income redistribution, is the best way to improve the situation of the economically disadvantaged. The extent of this development across almost every democratic country is worth exploring in detail.

Seymour Martin Lipset is the Caroline S.G. Munro Professor of Political Science and Sociology at Stanford University, and a senior fellow of the university's Hoover Institution. His most recent book is *Continental Divide: The Values and Institutions of the United States and Canada.*

*Documentation and references for statements and quotations in this article may be found in Seymour Martin Lipset, *Political Renewal on the Left: A Comparative Perspective* (Washington, D.C.: Progressive Policy Institute, 1990). Copies of this pamphlet may be obtained by writing to the author at Stanford University, or to the Progressive Policy Institute at 316 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Suite 555, Washington, D.C. 20003.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Australia and New Zealand

THE COMPARATIVE story may start in Australia, a country whose Labor party won majorities in a number of states as early as the 1890s. Labor parties have governed the Antipodes during most of the past decade. These parties—which came to office in societies with a strong commitment to extensive welfare state programs and wage increases—had to face the dysfunctional economic effects of high taxes, government deficits, inflation, and steady growth in wages.

Under Prime Minister Robert Hawke and Treasurer Paul Keating, the Labor government in Australia has cut interest rates and income taxes. There has been considerable deregulation. Even more startling, the government has reached an accord with the trade unions to limit wage inflation, so that real wages have fallen by 1 percent or more for each of the past five years. Hawke has gone around the world looking for investment capital, and in so doing has noted his administration's success in pursuing a deliberate policy of reducing the real income of Australian workers. He puts forth the new social democratic gospel that the capital for economic growth is not produced by high wages and taxes, but by profits, capital savings, and dividends. Hawke contends, as he told PBS's "Firing Line" last year, that

> if a social democratic government, such as mine, is going. . . to do as much for them [the poor outside the productive process] as we possibly can, then we have to have an economy which is growing as strongly as possible and I think in the early days [of the movement] some. . . didn't understand that. . . . [Y]ou have to be an idiot or just so blind with prejudice not to understand that you've got to have a healthy and growing private sector if you're going to look after the majority of the people.

Complaining about an unjustifiably severe tax structure under his conservative predecessors, Hawke went on to note that to give "the private. . . sector. . . the greatest incentive to invest and employ" he had to get rid of the "appallingly high tax rate, 60 percent of the top bracket, which Labor brought down to 49, and plans to lower further."

The story in New Zealand is similar. Returning to power in 1984, the Labour party has pursued what is frequently described as the most Thatcherite policy of any government, not excluding the original in Britain. In its first year in office, the new administration cut income taxes across the board, and terminated all exchange, price, wage, and interest-rate controls, along with much of the industrial subsidies which were introduced or intensified by the previous conservative governments. According to the *Economist*,

> The stated objectives of the policy are to turn New Zealand from an over controlled economy with high income tax, into a freer-market economy with low income tax, and to allow each enterprise. . . to be exposed to domestic and foreign competition.

David Lange, prime minister from 1984 to 1989, insisted that social democrats must accept economic inequality "because it is the engine which drives the economy." Many state enterprises have been privatized, including airlines, forestry, oil, coal, and electricity.

These economic changes do not mean the party has dropped its social concerns. The *Economist* also maintained that Prime Minister Lange "wants to make New Zealand richer so that he can afford to spend more money on what he regards as modern socialist causes": better education, a cleaner environment, and improvement in the situation of a "Maori underclass." While pursuing this radically new economic policy, Labour has tried to retain support among the Left intelligentsia by outspoken opposition to nuclear power and weaponry.

Southern Europe

SIMILAR stories may be told of other regions. Summing up the situation of the socialists in Greece, Italy, Portugal, and Spain, Tom Gallagher and Allan Wil-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

liams note in their book, *Southern European Socialism*, that

> in each party by the late 1970s, the Marxist . . . statutes in the constitutions of the parties [were] being deleted or watered down or simply ignored. . . . [R]adical economic prescriptions and redistributive policies were absent or else were set out in an opportunistic fashion. However the phrase is defined, none of the governments attempted to implement a specific socialist economic policy.

The four parties when in office "all displayed a high degree of economic orthodoxy. . . by implication, this means there has been little attempt to secure a substantial shift of resources to the working class, or to restrict the operations of private vs. socially owned capital." In the Portuguese case, according to Williams and Gallagher, when the conservatives replaced the socialists at the head of the government in 1988, the new right-wing prime minister "scolded the PS [Socialist party] for having been too austere in its economic programme." In Greece, the Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK), which held office from 1981 to 1989, also followed an austerity program from 1984 on, one which depressed the income of wage-earners while introducing tax incentives for new investment.

A more detailed look at the pattern in Italy and Spain is revealing. In Italy, when Bettino Craxi, the leader of what had been a minor socialist party, got his chance to head a coalition government with the larger Christian Democrats in 1983, he proceeded to reverse the heavy dose of statism which dated back to Mussolini's times. The public sector had been extended by the Christian Democrats, with their corporatist and communitarian emphases, in the forty-plus governments they had headed since the end of the war. During the 1970s, Craxi—looking for a distinctive role for his party and faced by the massive strength of the church-supported Christian Democrats and the working-class based Communists—modified his party's socialist ideology. Craxi's government lasted three years, a record among postwar Italian regimes. It was noteworthy for beginning a process of privatization of industry and pressing the unions for major concessions. It cut back wage increases, regulated strikes, and reformed the welfare state. Rent control was gradually relaxed in order to open the housing market.

The Socialists (PSI) have gained electorally to the point where they are now a threat to the Communists' (PCI) dominant position on the Left. In the May 1989 local government elections, for the first time since the war, the PSI secured a higher percentage of the votes than the Communists—19.1 percent compared to 16.9. During the 1970s, the PCI generally secured around one-third of the vote, while the Socialists hovered near the 10 percent level.

As the Italian Communists have declined in strength from their peak in 1976, losing heavily in votes and membership, they too have sought to modernize their appeal by emphasizing the party's independence from the Soviet Union, its commitment to a multiparty pluralistic system, its approval of Italian membership in NATO, and, increasingly, its rejection of Marxism and an explicit recognition of the virtues of a market economy. All this, it should be noted, happened well before Gorbachev's voice was heard. Writing in early 1989, Daniel Singer notes that the party has given up "attacking capitalism. It has become a social democratic party in all but name. . . [and] proposes to leave the Communist group in the European Parliament in Strasbourg in favor of the Socialist one. . . . "

Achille Occhetto, the PCI secretary, has proclaimed, "We are not part of an international Communist movement. . . . There is absolutely nothing left of Communism as a unitary and organic system." He wants to refound the party under a new name and to take it into the Socialist International. He insists: "We want democracy, no longer as a means to achieve socialism, but to achieve democracy as a universal end in itself."

In Spain, Socialist premier Felipe

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Gonzalez, reelected to a third term in 1989, converted his party—which had been Marxist in its initial post-Franco phase—to the support of privatization, the free market, and NATO. In a Churchillian formulation, Gonzalez has maintained that while a competitive, free market economy is marked by greed and corruption, and results in exploitation of the weak, "*capitalism is the least bad economic system in existence.*" In 1988, he commented, "My problem is not that there are rich people, but that there are poor people"—this by way of justifying an emphasis on economic growth rather than redistribution. Gonzalez's successful efforts to foster growth and reduce inflation have involved policies described by the *Economist* as making his government "look somewhat to the right of Mrs. Thatcher's." They include low wage increases and tight money policies which have led to conflicts with the unions. Following his narrow electoral victory in October 1989, Gonzalez reemphasized the need to "pursue policies attractive to Spanish business executives and foreign investors," to continue the country's high economic growth rate. These hit the intended target. Reviewing the factors underlying the Socialist triumph at the polls, Alan Riding of the *New York Times* quotes a leading industrialist: "The new right supports the Socialists. They. . . are completely committed to the market economy."

Latin America

THE SPANISH Socialists appear to have had an impact on the Left in Latin America. When I was in Argentina one and a half years ago, Peronist leaders told me that Gonzalez, on a tour of the continent, had been telling leftist leaders that their historic emphasis on statist and redistributionist policies was wrong and should be dropped. He argued that everything the state touches turns to ashes. Perhaps because of the economic disasters, including hyperinflation and low growth rates associated with populist redistributionist policies, left-of-center parties and leaders from Argentina to Mexico have been following his advice, creating freer markets, privatizing state-owned industry, and generally cutting the size of the public sector.

The new Peronist president of Argentina, Carlos Menem, is following a tighter money policy, selling off publicly owned corporations, and simplifying the tax system. The top personal income tax rate has been reduced from 45 to 36 percent, while the maximum corporate levy has been cut from 33 to 20 percent. Foreign investment and import restriction laws have been greatly liberalized. A leading Argentinean social scientist, Torcuato S. Di Tella, writes that "Menem is seen as a new Felipe Gonzalez who. . . administers the economy in ways acceptable to the capitalists."

Similar developments are occurring elsewhere in the region. According to the *Economist*, in Brazil, the Workers' party, in contesting the 1989 elections, "has given up calling for socialization of the means of production, and even sounds hazy about maintaining the loss-making enterprises in which the trade unions have most of their strength." More significant, perhaps, are the pronouncements by leading Chilean leftists that the post-Pinochet regime will drastically change the political system, while essentially continuing the seemingly successful high growth, free-market policies of its authoritarian predecessor. Already, the Socialists have approved freeing Chile's central bank from government control. Alejandro Foxley, a leader of the Christian Democratic Left, announced before the elections that "We'll maintain the basic features of the open economy: low uniform tariffs, the current [free] exchange rate policy, rather liberal rules on foreign investment." The *Wall Street Journal* reports that Jorge Arrate, secretary general of the Socialist party, identifies "a universal movement to reassess the content of liberal [anti-statist] democracy." And according to Shirley Christian of the *New York Times*, the leading Socialist figure in Chile, Ricardo Lagos, comments that the party has to be humble about its traditional beliefs, willing to change them, given the way "the world has changed." He

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

particularly emphasized the effect of the events in Eastern Europe: "Consider the impact on socialist ideology of a Lech Walesa—a union leader questioning the socialist world."

In Mexico, President Carlos Salinas of the PRI, a populist party, has attacked the tradition of big paternalistic government, which stems from the 1910 revolution and has been supported by his party ever since. In a speech in late October 1989, defending the sale of various state businesses, including airlines, telephones, and basic commodities, as well as the abolition of guaranteed prices for many farm products, Salinas said: "The reality is that in Mexico, a larger state has resulted in less capacity to respond to the social demands of our fellow citizens. The state concerned itself more with administering its properties than with meeting pressing social needs." Not surprisingly, his approach, like that of Gonzalez, is popularly referred to as *Thatcherismo*. Similar policies have been approved by the moderate Left or populist parties in countries as disparate as Bolivia, Costa Rica, and Uruguay.

France

THE SAME wave of ideological and programmatic moderation is carrying the day in Europe north of the Alps and Pyrenees.

During their first year in office in 1981, the French Socialists under President François Mitterrand sought to implement their historic commitments to nationalization and income redistribution. But by the spring of 1983 they had effectively reversed almost every priority of their original plan. Nationalization turned out to be an economic disaster. Faced with the need to compete on the international market, Michael Harrington observed, "the government adopted a program of controlled austerity. Wages were deindexed, which meant their real value fell and profits absorbed all of the positive gains from productivity."

Mitterrand was able to win reelection in 1988. His choice for prime minister for his second term was Michel Rocard, leader of the social democratic forces in the party. Rocard resembles Craxi and Gonzalez in his approach to politics and economics. He, too, argues that the way to achieve social and economic justice is to enlarge the pie, to encourage increased investment so everyone can have a larger slice, a goal which is enhanced by tax cuts. His finance minister, Pierre Beregovoy, has emphasized the need for wage restraint.

During the 1980s, the Socialists moved away from their historic hostility to business as they came to acknowledge that entrepreneurship—behavior that is minimally present in state-owned industry—is the dynamo that makes for increased productivity. As Suzanne Berger has noted, Jean-Pierre Chevenement, then-Socialist minister of industry and research, emphasized the need to give "industry the respect it has always been begrudged in our country."

During the 1988 election, Mitterrand and Rocard took the unusual step of arguing that it would be bad for the country if one party—their own—had a majority in Parliament as well as the presidency. The president said, "it is not healthy for one party to govern." In effect, they argued that middle-of-the-road centrist government is preferable to control by a leftist ideological tendency. According to the *Economist*, Rocard in fact publicly promised an "opening to the centre."

Germany and Austria

THE LARGE Social Democratic parties of Germany and Austria rejected Marxism and moved toward becoming "catch all" populist, rather than class-based, parties sooner than most of their continental brethren. As noted earlier, the German party set the path for the rest of the International in its Bad Godesberg program adopted in 1959. According to Dennis Bark and David Gress,

> The program represented a fundamental shift in philosophical direction for the party, from primary emphasis on Marxism and Marxist

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> solutions for problems of social and economic life, to primary emphasis on recognizing the achievements of liberal capitalism. . . . It therefore rejected the goal of state ownership of the means of production. . . .

As political scientist Russell Dalton emphasizes, "Karl Marx would have been surprised to read this Godesberg program and learn that free economic competition was one of the essential conditions of a social democratic economic policy." The Social Democrats (SPD), when heading the West German government from 1969 to 1982, did not press for structural or other major changes, and Chancellor Helmut Schmidt himself noted his party's interests in extending profits: "The profits of enterprises today are the investments of tomorrow, and the investments of tomorrow are the employment of the day after."

During the 1980s, the SPD lost electoral support to the Greens. In reaction, at a national conference in December 1989, the SPD adopted the Berlin Programme—"Bad Godesberg plus feminism and environmentalism," as a writer for the *Financial Times* described it. Oskar Lafontaine, the party's candidate for chancellor (whose major following is among the new middle class), seeks to deemphasize government intervention in the economy. He states categorically: "Either you abolish the system, or you stick to the rules of the game." These policies have won the SPD support among some "modern entrepreneurs," most notably Daimler-Benz (Mercedes) board president Eduard Reuter, who is a dues-paying party member.

Scandinavia

IF WE LOOK north to Scandinavia, the heartland of European socialist strength, the story is repeated. The most powerful socialist party electorally, the Swedish Social Democratic party—which has held office since the early 1930s with the exception of two terms between 1976 and 1982—has abandoned its former positions on wage growth, high income tax, and heavy welfare spending. As Michael Harrington summed up, after returning to office "with the agreement of the unions, [Socialist premier] Palme devalued the Swedish Krona, made exports more competitive, increased employment *and* reduced the real income of those with a job, most of whom had voted for him."

The Swedish Social Democrats, who have always rejected nationalization of industry, decided in the mid–1970s to use corporate taxes to set up a "worker-controlled" mutual fund. They hoped gradually to buy up stock in large corporations, thereby creating decentralized social ownership. The proposal was, however, changed drastically after public debate revealed that the population as a whole, and even socialist voters, feared it would give the state too much power.

By the end of the 1980s, Klas Eklund, a leading party economist, was quoted as saying: "The traditional Social Democratic strategy of the post-war period is no longer viable. That [strategy] was to recognize a need, create a public service project to fulfill that need, and then raise taxes for it." The party is now pursuing a vigorous tax-cutting strategy as well as trying to curtail entitlements. Kjell-Olof Feldt, a leading Socialist and until recently finance minister, has celebrated the market in the party's magazine: "The market economy's facility for change and development and therefore economic growth has done more to eliminate poverty and 'the exploitation of the working class' than any political intervention in the market's system of distribution." He argues that the party "must not. . . become the anti-capitalist party," that it must have a "greater market orientation," and that the growth of the welfare state must cease.

Swedish tax policy reflects these orientations. As Sven Steinmo points out in *Politics and Society:*

> In Sweden. . .taxes on corporate profits are inversely related to both profitability and size. In other words, the larger and more profitable a corporation, the lower its tax rate. . . . In 1980

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

among the OECD countries Sweden had the . . . lowest yield from corporate taxes. The Swedish taxes that are exceptionally onerous in comparative perspective are the flat-rate local income tax (30 percent on average), the national VAT (24 percent), and the flat rate social security tax (36 percent). . . . In addition, Social Democratic government policies have specifically encouraged the concentration of capital.

The Norwegian Social Democrats, who were turned out of office in September 1989, had been trying to follow the policy lead of their Swedish comrades. While in power, the Labor government prevented wage increases and devalued the currency, successfully seeking to reduce inflation. (The unemployment rate, however, doubled.)

Britain and Canada

THE MOST important leftist opposition movement in Europe, the British Labour party, until recently pursued more statist economic policies, and a more dovish foreign policy, than any other social democratic party. In 1989, after three successive electoral defeats at the hands of Margaret Thatcher, it did an about-face under Neil Kinnock's leadership, joining the ranks of the social democratic moderates in both the domestic and foreign policy realms. By doing so Kinnock hopes to reassemble the scattered votes of those opposed to Thatcher, many of whom had moved to splinter groups on the party's right.

David Marquand, an intellectual leader of the democratic Liberal party who quit the Labour party because he found it too left-wing, now notes in the *Guardian* that "there can be no doubt that Labour . . . has become another European social-democratic party committed to . . . mixed economy. . . . Labour has . . . taken a giant stride to the centre." The *Financial Times* editorializes that "Britain's Labour Party is changing from an organization led by socialist romantics to something like the Democratic Party of the U.S." Party leader Kinnock argues that his party's efforts should be addressed to making capitalism "work more efficiently, more fairly and more successfully in the world marketplace," and that to continue to advocate nationalization of industry is not socialism, but "dreaming."

Another smaller Commonwealth opposition social democratic party, the New Democrats of Canada, has also moved in the same direction as its larger British brother. Ed Broadbent, then leader of the party, is reported as saying in 1989:

> The serious debate about the future is not about the desirability of a market economy. For most thoughtful people that debate is now closed. . . . We New Democrats believe in the marketplace, including private investment decisions, reduced tariffs, private property, the free disposal of assets, the right to make a profit, decentralized decision making. . . . As the world evolves so must our policies.

The major social democratic movement in French Canada, the nationalist Parti Quebeçois (PQ), held office provincially from 1976 to 1985. Its record in government resembles that of the French Socialist party. Initially it introduced a variety of social democratic measures, including nationalization of a few industries, an increase in the minimum wage, and improvements in state medical care provisions. But faced with problems of growing inflation and unemployment, the Quebec social democrats retreated, questioning the efficiency of nationalized industries and giving more emphasis to the role of the private sector. In the early 1980s, they cut public expenditures sharply, including the real income of state employees, which led to bitter struggles with government workers and their unions. Since losing office, the PQ has further deemphasized the statist elements in its ideology.

Japan and Israel

I CONCLUDE this survey with two economically developed and democratic polities, Japan and Israel. Until recently, the Japanese Socialist party (JSP)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

dwelt ineffectually in a Marxist and neutralist electoral ghetto and posed no challenge to the long-governing Liberal Democrats. But in 1989, as a result of scandals by the governing party, the JSP wakened to the challenge of gaining power. Its first woman party leader, Takako Doi, emphasizes a determination to break through the "inertia of eternal opposition" by reaching out "to all segments of the population." According to the *New York Times*, her party is no longer "interested in nationalizing Japan's private industries," and she "no longer talks about dismantling Japan's military forces, abandoning its 29-year-old security treaty with the United States, or shutting down the nuclear power plants that supply Japan with a third of its electricity." The *Economist*'s Tokyo correspondent reports that "most Socialists agree that state controlled economies have failed miserably." As a result, according to political scientist Masataka Kosaka in the *New York Times*, "few Japanese . . . believe that Japan would go socialist under the Socialist party. For the first time Japan is relaxed about the prospect of socialist rule."

A similar outcome has occurred in Israel. There, a committed socialist movement with personal and ideological roots in Eastern Europe and Russia has been transformed into one which accepts the need for private enterprise.

Socialist parties controlled the Israeli government during the first three decades of national existence, down to 1977. They extended public ownership to various areas including airlines, shipping, railroads, airplane manufacturing, communications, utilities, and chemicals. Indeed, taking into account all forms of non-profit business—producers' cooperatives and those owned by the trade union movement and the government—Israel has had the most socialized economy outside the communist world.

As Israel absorbed immigrant populations not committed to socialism, and developed economically with a steadily expanding private sector, many of its socialist institutions proved inefficient both relatively (compared to independently owned companies) and absolutely (operating at a loss). Enthusiasm for nonprofit enterprise declined. The socialists lost control of the government in the 1977 elections and have not regained a majority since, although the Labor party was part of a coalition government with the right-wing Likud party from 1984 to 1990.

Most Israeli academic economists, although supportive of the Left for foreign policy reasons, now press the Labor party to accept free-market policies. And during the 1980s, many of the country's nonprofit institutions—such as the different companies owned by the giant trade union conglomerate Koor and various state enterprises—have been identified as candidates for privatization.

Although the Labor party and the Histadrut—the trade union movement—seek to preserve the *kibbutzim* (cooperative farms), they increasingly accept the need to sell off much of the publicly- and worker-owned sector. The state owned industries up for sale include El Al (the national airline), Bezak Telecommunications, Israel Chemicals, and Zim Cables. Labor party leader Shimon Peres, who was in charge of economic policy in the coalition government from 1986 until its overturn in 1990, argues that the party's first priority is to encourage investment and to create jobs. He has accepted advice that the budget must be reduced by cutting social expenditure. Among other changes proposed by Labor's leader are abolition of free schooling and of subsidies on eggs and poultry; cuts in social insurance payments and family allowances; and the end of government mortgages for housing young couples.

The Histadrut has recognized the need to follow similar policies in the large worker-owned sector of the economy. Its secretary general, Yisrael Kesar, has noted the similarities between the problems facing his organization and the economies of Eastern Europe, and has called for "perestroika for the Histadrut," with the end of "financial aid for failing operations."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In all parts of the world, then, the democratic socialist story is essentially the same. In each case, the Left has recognized the need for market-oriented economic policies to stimulate investment and productivity, and for electoral efforts to take the middle-of-the-road voters away from the Right. Only the American story has been strikingly—and curiously—different.

While the Democratic party obviously is not becoming socialist, the left-wing forces within it remain strong, if not dominant, both in terms of voting behavior in Congress and of presidential nominations. In recent years, the national Democrats have been more disposed to adhere to a redistributionist, progressive tax, antibusiness orientation than most social democratic parties elsewhere. They have also been more supportive of cultural liberalism, of practices invidiously dubbed as "permissive." There has even been a growth in the number of avowed and near-socialists who have won nominations and sometimes even elections as Democrats. And trade union-fostered protectionist doctrines have made headway in the congressional party.

Although the economic doctrines described as "neo-liberal," which focus on market forces, have received public endorsements from some Democratic politicians, on most domestic and foreign policy issues the party remains identified with styles and policies which emerged in the 1960s—ones which clearly alienated many traditional Democrats, particularly the less educated and more religious among them. This trend has been documented statistically by one of the party's most liberal factions, the Americans for Democratic Action (ADA), which has kept score on the ideological behavior of members of Congress. ADA finds a steady increase in liberal voting among Democrats between the late 1960s and the late 1980s. House Democrats averaged 54 percent liberal voting in the three years between 1968 and 1970, 57 percent in 1975 to 1977, and moved up to 75 percent in 1987 to 1989. Their Senate brethren exhibited similar behavior: 44 percent in the first period, 58 percent in the second, and 73 percent in the most recent three years. The southern states particularly contributed to these changes.

Unlike most European Social Democrats, the Democrats continue to press for income redistribution. As Henry Aaron documents in the *Brookings Review*, the 1986 Tax-Reform Act led to a drop in the income tax burden of all earning less than $50,000, more for the under $20,000, most for the less than $10,000, while it increased the share of taxes paid by those with higher incomes, considerably for the $100,000 to $200,000 income class, greatest for the $200,000 or more. Ronald Reagan, of course, signed the measure. And, as Sven Steinmo emphasizes: "When all taxes are considered. . .the United States relies substantially more heavily on 'redistributive' individual and corporate income tax and property inheritance and wealth taxes than either Britain or Sweden."

Thus, while overseas socialists—social democrats as well as the Eastern European and Soviet communists—moved toward classical liberalism and the free market, the Democrats shifted to the Left in the 1960s and 1970s and have not reversed course in the 1980s. By "the Democrats," I mean the bulk of the party's leadership in national office, most of the delegates to national conventions, and its most prominent intelligentsia—not the voters. The latter, opinion polls indicate, are much more conservative or traditional than the party's leadership—a difference that explains, in part, the defection of many Democrats to Republican presidential candidates.

With the exception of Jimmy Carter during his first campaign, Democratic nominees from George McGovern in 1972 to Michael Dukakis in 1988 have been linked in the public mind with the advocacy of a strong state in the domestic economic and welfare areas; a soft foreign and defense policy; and social permissiveness with respect to drugs, crime, family values, and sexual behavior.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Many traditional blue collar and ethnic Democrats, while still somewhat supportive of New Deal-type economic policies, disdain both the social and foreign policies associated with the party's Left.

Rejecting these policies, however, is not the same thing as opposing the Democratic party. Since the American electorate continues to place self-interest above ideology, most also support programs designed to safeguard people like themselves—by providing health care, subsidizing college education, protecting the elderly, and guaranteeing jobs. To secure these objectives, they vote Democratic for Congress.

Congress is the place where sectional interests fight it out. Members perform services, act as ombudsmen, and represent interests. They appeal narrowly, rather than broadly. And the Democrats, with their links to mass groups and popularly-based interest organizations, are in a better position to fulfill these functions. Following former House Speaker Tip O'Neill's maxim that in America, "all politics is local," Democratic congressional candidates have successfully presented themselves as advocates of whatever interests are dominant in their areas.

Backward or Advanced?

THE AMERICAN Left's current odd-man-out status may be related to the old and persistent question of why the United States has been the only industrialized society without a viable socialist or labor party—why it has been politically "exceptional." Some analysts, particularly those on the Left, have long perceived America as politically "backward," lagging behind the much more class conscious and ideological polities of most of Europe and the Antipodes.

But this formulation is curious from an orthodox Marxist perspective. Marx postulated that cultural superstructures, particularly politics, are functionally derivative from basic structures, i.e., economic and technological systems. And since he also assumed that working-class "consciousness" and socialist beliefs were inherent outcomes of the structural contradictions of industrial society, it followed that the more industrially advanced a society, the more likely that it would have a powerful radical socialist movement. As he put it in *Capital*: "The country that is more developed industrially only shows to the less developed the image of their future." Socialism, Marx concluded, would therefore sink deepest roots, would come to power first, in the most advanced economy—which, from the late nineteenth century on, has been the United States.

Before World War I, Marxists and socialists did not shy away from publicly drawing this inference, even when they knew and worried about the weakness of the American Socialist party. Major figures like August Bebel and Karl Kautsky in Germany, Paul LaFargue (Marx's son-in-law) in France, H.M. Hyndman in England, Maxim Gorki in Russia, and Daniel DeLeon in the United States, all stated this expectation. Max Beer, an Austrian socialist who worked during the first three decades of this century for the Socialist International, reports in his autobiography that European socialist leaders were concerned about the failures of the movement in the United States, and that they recognized in private conversations that this development, or lack of one, raised the possibility that basic Marxist theoretical assumptions might be invalid.

As we know, a significant American socialist movement never emerged. But even in Marxist terms, whether this constitutes "backwardness" or "superiority" is ambiguous. A social theorist impressed by what Marx had to say in general about the relationship between economic structure and cultural superstructure, but agnostic about socialism, might conclude that whatever political and cultural forms actually prevailed in the world's most industrially advanced country—the United States—must of necessity represent those most appropriate to advanced industrial (or post-industrial, if you will) society. That is, a high level of technology and affluence produces moderately class-related

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

political cleavages with a low level of ideological conflict. Conversely, history suggests that strong class consciousness and conflict, along with radical socialist politics, characterize less developed, severely inegalitarian societies, particularly those undergoing early and rapid industrialization. And, as we have seen all over the industrialized world, the labor, socialist, and social democratic parties (as well as the Italian Communists) have given up their Marxism, dropped their emphasis on being working-class movements, and increasingly taken on a populist reformist stance closer to the traditional American model.

But, ironically, the provider of that model—the American Democratic party—has been moving in the opposite direction during the same period. What is the explanation? There are, I believe, three factors involved.

FIRST IS the difference between the structure and power of political leadership in parliamentary countries and in the American presidential-congressional system. The system of party discipline so absent in the United States is pervasive abroad, and with it goes a much greater control of party policy by leaders, as well as legislative discipline. In parliamentary countries, the leadership usually stays in power within the parties even after being defeated in elections. Whether in control of government or not, it can evaluate the electoral consequences of policies and take action to change those which appear to have failed. Most of these parties have polling and research staffs which are unaffected by election outcomes. They continue to produce research monographs and to recommend policy adjustments in response to analyses of long-term trends.

Because of the separation of the executive and legislature, parties in the United States have *always* been looser, less disciplined, and less bureaucratic than in parliamentary systems. But various changes in party rules and the expansion of the primary system in the late 1960s and the 1970s made the national parties, particularly the Democrats, weaker than ever. Given changes in the leadership after each electoral defeat, and national nominations and conventions not controlled or even seriously influenced by party institutions, no one can think or speak for the party when it does not control the White House. Pollsters, researchers, and key policy advisers change from election to election. Candidates first seek to be nominated and to look for financial and pre-primary activist support. For Democrats running for President, much of that support comes from the Left. Party activists who are no longer concerned with patronage jobs do not ask "How can we win?" or "What went wrong in the last election?"; they support those closest to them ideologically. Hence the national Democratic party, as compared to European socialist ones, scarcely exists as an organization. It cannot draw lessons from defeat or make policy changes which are binding on those who will run its next presidential campaign or represent it in Congress.

Second, there is the difference between the economic views held by the Left in countries which have parties and trade unions with socialist or corporatist-derived backgrounds, and those that characterize liberals and unionists.[1] The American ethos—antistatist, individualistic, and competitive—does not encourage thinking by trade unions or other interest groups about what is good for the nation, the economy, or their party. Should any group be asked or forced to sacrifice for the benefit of the whole—for, say, increased productivity? No. The goal, in Samuel Gomper's words, is always "more"—nothing more elevated. American trade unions, unlike the more "solidaristic" European socialist and Catholic ones, are as competitive, as uninterested in the national welfare, as business. Such anarchic or syndicalist tendencies could and did function well in an expanding autarchic economy in which for-

[1] "Corporatist" refers to class-negotiated economic bargaining among business, government, and labor to settle basic policies each year. It occurs in Austria, Germany, Scandinavia, and elsewhere.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

eign trade was of small importance. They are weaker guides for a nation obliged to meet serious international competition.

THE THIRD factor is the different response of intellectuals in the United States and in other industrialized democracies to the crisis of Marxist and socialist ideology. In most Western countries—where involvement in the ideology was linked to a commitment to powerful socialist and/or communist movements, and where the ideology was related to policies, programs, and activities—the crisis has been a matter of major concern. What had been adopted seriously could only be removed seriously, and serious consequences followed from doing so—organizational as well as ideological ones.

In the United States, on the other hand, the involvement of intellectuals (and their camp followers) with Marxism has been more personal and less institutional, more abstract and involving little in the way of "praxis." As Richard Hofstadter and Lionel Trilling emphasized, the attachment has been inspired and sustained more by a desire to be anti-establishment, to be adversarial towards bourgeois and national patriotic values, than by a concern to implement specific political and social programs. In these circumstances, increasing evidence that Marxism does not deliver, that regimes and policies associated with it are disastrous failures, is largely irrelevant. Its operational validity and utility were not the point.

Thus, while the intellectuals of countries from France to Japan have been deserting in droves, Marxism is still alive and relatively well in American arts and letters and social sciences. As Garry Abrams has noted, "American universities may be one of the last bastions of intellectual Marxism, at least in the developed world." As survey research has documented, the ideological Left is strong in Hollywood and among creative personnel in television, and within the major research universities. There is also a significant number of fellow travelers among the well-educated consumers of university research and intellectual creativity. Those who have had some postgraduate education are the most left-wing segment in the electorate. These groups participate in politics more effectively than any other and vote predominantly for more liberal candidates in primaries, thus helping to keep the Democrats on the Left. It may be noted that leftists—often self-identified radicals—have been elected to office in communities with concentrations of such people—for example, Ann Arbor, Amherst, Austin, Berkeley, Boulder, Burlington (Vermont), Cambridge, Hyde Park, Ithaca, Madison, Manhattan, Santa Cruz, and Santa Monica.

Is it likely that this will change, that in the United States—which witnessed a heightening of ideological and cultural cleavage in the 1960s and 1970s—intellectuals will move toward a new decline of ideology? Surely the changes abroad should have some impact. In Indochina and Nicaragua, the two Third World areas whose Marxist movements have most appealed to American liberals and leftists, the Communist regimes have openly acknowledged the failings of statism, even prior to the Sandinista electoral defeat. Since 1986, when the Vietnamese constitution was amended to guarantee the rights of private property, the public sector is being curtailed in favor of a burgeoning private one. In Nicaragua, the Sandinista regime, exposed to a steady economic decline and Soviet advice, adopted a market-oriented program described by Fidel Castro as "the most right-wing policy in Latin America." Although few among the left-leaning American intelligentsia have been sympathetic to the Soviet Union in recent decades, the acceptance of market economics there should also makes itself felt. As Soviet theorists turn to Max Weber and Talcott Parsons to justify reform, and as official Soviet Foreign Ministry spokesmen assert that most developing countries "suffer not so much from capitalism as from a lack of it," a theme repeated by a leading Vietnamese economist, it is going to be increasingly difficult to keep the flame of Marxist faith alight.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE SIMILARITIES in policy changes among socialist parties the world over are so striking as to suggest that the Socialist International resembles the Comintern of Lenin and Stalin in its ability to command conformity from member parties. Nothing, of course, is further from the truth. The International has no power over affiliates. It is largely a discussion body. Still, as Neil Kinnock has said, "the same broad attitudes. . . [have been] adopted, not only by the democratic socialists and social democratic parties. . . but also amongst the reform wing of the old Communist parties." These involve "a general realization that you need the combination of the market and the socially responsible community. . . . " Commenting on the democratic socialists of Eastern Europe, the *Economist* noted in March 1990 that they also have begun to question whether "there really was a 'middle road' " between communism and capitalism. Like their compeers in the West, they too "accept the goal of enterprise economy, but want it tempered by social concerns."

The "realization" Kinnock speaks of is based on commonplace facts. State-owned industries have proven to be much less efficient than private concerns. Competition has shown itself to be a much greater stimulant to innovation and economic growth than private or public monopolies. Incentives, differential rewards, and profits make for greater commitment to work on the part of employees and more reliable and attractive products from entrepreneurs. There is clearly a threshold beyond which taxes act as disincentives for both labor and capital. And redistributive tax policies designed to benefit the underprivileged, no matter how moral they may appear, are dysfunctional if they serve to slow down investment and productivity. These truisms of market economics are now largely accepted by communists and socialists.

Ironically, some of the very factors which have historically stimulated economic growth (and with it, the failure of socialism) in the United States—the emphases in the value system of individualism and laissez-faire, and the lack of communalism—now enable the American Left to ignore national needs, and to follow the logic of their ideology: to favor higher taxes, redistributive and nationalist economic programs, and radical cultural policies.

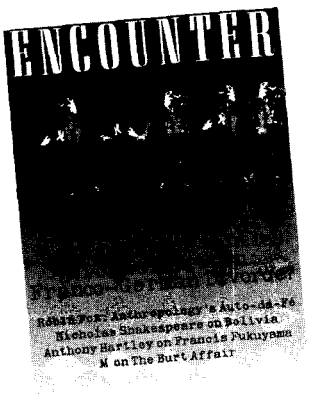
Those who seek to strengthen the structure of America's Left party and to make it more effective—the Democratic Leadership Council led by Senators Sam Nunn and Charles Robb, the California State Committee chaired by former Governor Jerry Brown, the "old school" party leaders led by Robert Strauss—find themselves up against an institutionalized and activist egalitarianism. In Christopher Matthews's words, the new party strengtheners pine for a party that is "a bit less democratic but a great deal more united." Robb calls for the party's "disenthralling itself from the spell of the new activist elite," and seeks the reassertion of "the primacy of the national party over individual agendas of particular constituencies." As Strauss puts it: "We need a candidate who looks like he can run the show. Leadership and toughness are what. . . [we are] looking for." Another party leader, Bob Beckel, who managed Mondale's campaign, states: "We party leaders need to start guiding the process and stop being dominated by it." What they long for is an organization capable of performing the major functions of parties elsewhere—functions like nominating electable candidates and drawing up programs with maximum voter appeal. In other words, they would like the Democratic party of the United States of America to become like the social democrats of other Western countries; ironically, to end American political exceptionalism by moving their party to the right.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Malcolm Bradbury, Michael Foot, Henry Kissinger, Cecil Parkinson, Jeane Kirkpatrick, Helmut Schmidt, Rupert Murdoch, Duke of Devonshire, Yehudi Menuhin, John Cleese, Seamus Heaney, Milton Friedman, Mary Kenny, Alexander Chancellor, George Will, Bernard Levin, Michael Heseltine, Max Kampelman, Tom Stoppard, Milovan Djilas, Claus Von Bulow, Paul Nitze, Daniel Moynihan, William F. Buckley, Susan Sontag, Ian McShane, Jeffrey Archer, Anthony Thwaite, Kingsley Amis, Gavin Lyall, Lord Carrington, Arnold Beichman, David Frost, Leo Rosten, Zbigniew Brzezinski, Leon Levy, Leszek Kolakowski, Melvyn Bragg, Noel Annan, William Boyd, Robert Elegant, Max Beloff, Harold Lever, Anthony Burgess, David Owen, John O'Sullivan, Brian Redhead, Nikolai Tolstoy, Irving Kristol, Bruno Bettelheim, Conrad Black, Ron Burr, Edward Teller, Eric Rhode, David Pryce-Jones, James Goldsmith, Graham Greene, Octavio Paz, Michael Caine, William Simon, Donald Regan, Gerald Ronson, Andrew Knight, Studs Terkel, Walter Rostow, Peter Parker, David Hockney, Paul Volcker, Lord Bauer, Frank Shakespeare, Roy Jenkins, Harvey Tyson, Auberon Waugh

SEND $33.75 AND SUBSCRIBE FOR THE SAME REASONS THEY DO

There has got to be something special about a magazine that persuades people like these, along with many thousands of others to renew their subscriptions year after year.

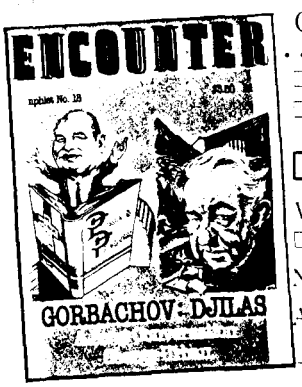


The first issue in October 1953 featured prose by Albert Camus and Christopher Isherwood, poems by C. Day Lewis and Edith Sitwell, economics by J K Galbraith, literary criticism by Stephen Spender. Nearly 35 years later and with loyal subscribers in more than 90 countries, Encounter continues to thrive by presenting – each month – a constantly surprising mix of ideas. Opinions clash – important issues of contemporary life are debated and analysed – with poets and philosophers, journalists and historians, politicians and artists arguing it out together.

Take advantage of our special offer.

Send us your payment, US$33.75 or Canadian $39 , this gives you a 25% discount and we will start your subscription with the next available issue.

Give yourself something to think about – Subscribe now!



☐ I enclose my cheque to Encounter Ltd
☐ I wish to pay by credit card ☐ American Express ☐ Access/MasterCard

Valid until _____ Signature _____
☐ Invoice me ☐ Invoice my company

Name _____

Address _____

EXCLUSIVE OFFER
25% off plus additional bonus: free copy of DJILAS interview.

N Encounter Ltd, 44 Great Windmill Street, London W1V 7PA, England.
Telephone 01-434 3063.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Waiting for Yeltsin

Is Boris Good Enough?

Leon Aron

Everything's in disarray, and no one's there
To say, as cold sets in, that disarray
Is everywhere, and how sweet becomes the prayer:
Rossia, Lethe, Lorelei.
—Osip Mandelshtam,
"The Decembrists," 1917[1]

WITH THE DEATH of Andrei Dmitrievich Sakharov on December 14, 1989, the Soviet Union may have lost its only personified hope for national reconciliation. Sakharov's disappearance from the Soviet political scene marked the point at which what had been known as the "Soviet crisis" entered the terminal stage: national catastrophe.

History rarely produces figures who can both throw stones and gather them, who can destroy the old order and lay the foundation for a new one, who can trumpet discord and celebrate harmony. George Washington was one. Sakharov might have become another.

Sakharov left no heir, no stone gatherer of national stature. There is no one in today's Soviet Union who, like Sakharov, is admitted to and trusted by the three progressively distant and hostile camps that dominate the Soviet political landscape: Gorbachev and the establishment reformers; the pro-capitalist and pro-Western Moscow intelligentsia;[2] and the rapidly radicalizing, and increasingly self-conscious and unified populist movements. Instead, in a country rapidly polarizing and depleted of trust—the most essential ingredient of peaceful reform—Sakharov left behind a slew of vocal, energetic, and willful stone throwers. Of these, Boris Nikolaevich Yeltsin—now president of the Republic of Russia—is by far the most formidable.

Still, he is enigmatic, perhaps deliberately so. From Yeltsin's past, one can form a fairly good idea of how he might go about doing things, but not of what specific things he is likely to do. This puzzle comes from the unique nature of Yeltsin's political base: he is the only Soviet politician who enjoys both the ardent, often fanatical, devotion of the Soviet *hoi polloi* and the solid, albeit guarded and qualified, support of most of the intelli-

Leon Aron, who emigrated from the Soviet Union in 1978, is the Salvatori Senior Policy Analyst in Soviet Studies at the Heritage Foundation in Washington, D.C., and is gathering materials for a book about Boris Yeltsin.

[1]All Russian translations in the text are the author's own.

[2]In the confusing Soviet political parlance, to be procapitalist and pro-Western is to be thought of as one of "the Left." The proponents of hard-line communist orthodoxy are labelled "the Right" and "the conservatives." For authenticity's sake, these denominations are preserved in the text, but for clarity's sake, they are enclosed in quotation marks.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

gentsia. As we shall see, keeping both constituencies happy is no easy matter.

Soviet totalitarianism can be divided into four stages: the mature, when people were afraid to think (Stalin); the aging, when they could think but were still afraid to talk (Khrushchev); the decaying, when thinking and talking privately was usually safe but acting was not (Brezhnev); and the dying, when, gradually, people have been allowed to act (Gorbachev). Yeltsin himself has been instrumental to the arrival of this last stage; he has also been symbolic of it.

Until the era of Gorbachev, however, Yeltsin's reactions to the life around him were not atypical. He did not think under Stalin (and, by his own admission, wept when the tyrant died); he thought but did not talk under Khrushchev; and he talked but did not act under Brezhnev.

IN THE PITCH darkness of 1931, as Stalin celebrated his victory over the Russian village—starved, arrested, uprooted, and murdered—two peasant Russian boys were born who would do more than anyone else to undermine the very foundations of the house that Stalin built. Boria Yeltsin arrived on February 1, in a Ural village. A month later, Misha Gorbachev was born in the southern Russian province of Stavropol. They were to rise fast and in parallel; ultimately their paths would intersect, travel closely together, and then diverge sharply and painfully.

Like Gorbachev's, Yeltsin's career was swift and stellar. A graduate of the Department of Civil Engineering of the Ural Polytechnic Institute, he became chief engineer of the Construction Directorate in his mid-twenties and manager of a huge industrial complex at thirty-two. Five years later, Yeltsin was appointed the construction section chief of the Sverdlovsk Regional Party Committee. He then became a secretary, and a year later, at the tender Soviet political age of forty-five, first secretary. This made him absolute master of the Sverdlovsk province, the Soviet Union's third largest industrial area. In rushing to appoint Yeltsin, the Brezhnev Politburo had violated the rules; not only had Yeltsin leapfrogged the obligatory tenure as the second secretary of the regional committee; he was, in fact, promoted while the current second secretary, who ordinarily would have taken over the province, was still in office.

During his nine years as the Sverdlovsk ruler, Yeltsin gave a foretaste of things to come. He permitted his subordinates to criticize him; he fielded "provocative" questions at meetings with the "laboring masses"; he initiated call-in TV shows in which the leaders of the province were forced to appear. During one such show, a caller inquired angrily why Yeltsin's wife was driven to work in her husband's state car—a practice considered a normal perk of the state and party *nachal'niki*. Yeltsin promised that his wife would use his car no more. He kept his word.

That such transgressions were tolerated by Moscow is a testimony to the apathy, emaciation, and rot of the waning years of Brezhnev's reign. It helped that the "human face" of Yeltsin's rule lurked safely behind the Ural Mountains, thirteen hundred kilometers from Moscow: nothing of the sort would have been allowed in Central Russia.

Then, too, Yeltsin knew when to put limits on his mild iconoclasm. When Brezhnev's seventieth anniversary came around, Yeltsin obediently lent his voice to the chorus of tributes to the now much-vilified "architect of stagnation." The missive from the Sverdlovsk Regional Party Committee, signed by Yeltsin, extolled Brezhnev's "wisdom, a giant organizing talent, bubbling energy, [devoted to] the construction of communism." Yeltsin's message to Brezhnev went on to say that

> We who live in the Urals thank you ardently and from the bottom of our soul, Leonid Ilyich, for your constant care for the strengthening of the economic and military might of our Motherland, the raising of material and cultural level of people's life, for your titanic activity aimed at the establishment of solid peace in the whole world.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Again, following the Politburo's secret decision to demolish the Ipatiev House, in the basement of which Czar Nicholas II, his wife, and children were executed in 1918, Yeltsin sent in the bulldozers in the middle of the night. By morning, only a patch of fresh asphalt marked the spot.

But undoubtedly the greater leniency accorded Yeltsin was also Moscow's tribute to his leadership. He was bright, hard working, well-liked by the people, and did not take bribes—a Soviet wonder. These qualities prompted a new general secretary, Mikhail Sergeevich Gorbachev, five days after his election, to summon Yeltsin to Moscow to join the Central Committee apparatus. Nine months later, Yelstin became the first secretary of the Moscow City Committee, the most prestigious of all the local party posts and one traditionally given to the general secretary's most trusted ally.

Ryba portitsia s golovy, a Russian proverb claims—"a fish begins to rot head first." As Yeltsin took over in December 1985, Moscow was a thoroughly rotten head of the country. From eight till two in the morning, Yeltsin fired and harangued, thundered and cajoled—and still, as he put it, "could not get to the bottom of the filthy well." One wholesale purge of the party bosses and trade officials followed another. But still the Soviet capital—whose worn-out transportation and theft-ridden stores could not cope with daily invasions of visitors (two million a month in winter, three million in summer) looking for something, indeed anything, to buy—showed no sign of improvement.

AS YELTSIN correctly claimed later, the only thing to improve during his short Moscow tenure was the "atmosphere." After eighteen years of Victor Grishin—Brezhnev's distant, corrupt, servile, and high-handed crony—the new master, who began riding buses and metros instead of zooming down a special line in a black limo, became an instant star. Voluble and gregarious, he liberally dispensed his opinions on a multitude of subjects. One of Yeltsin's cracks, which delighted Muscovites, traced marital discord in the Soviet capital to the size of Moscow kitchens—kitchens totally incapable, according to Yeltsin, of accommodating mightily proportioned Russian women, and thus progenitors of ugly family feuds.

Yeltsin authorized the mass media in his domain to begin publishing and broadcasting the truth. Thanks to a new line of publications of *Moskovskaya Pravda* and *Moskovskiy Komsomoletz*, Muscovites were the first Russian readers in the country to behold, astonished, words like *prostitutka*, *narkoman* (drug addict), and *mafia*—this time to describe Soviet, not "bourgeois," reality.

The new first secretary initiated a spate of entertainments, from dog shows to wind orchestra competitions. But his most popular brain child was open-air trade fairs—*yarmarki*. Unable to break the trade mafia, Yeltsin decided to bypass it by having agricultural produce sold by farmers directly to Muscovites. Yet exercises in free marketing *yarmarki* were not: unlike the several "farmers' markets" in the city, the prices at *yarmarki* were kept lower by fiat. Every now and then Yeltsin made surprise visits to fairs. On one of such visits, he harangued Azerbaijani farmers: "Aren't you ashamed of yourself, to squeeze the Muscovites like this? They send you machinery, refrigerators. . . . Come, come, you can take a ruble off your fruit, half a ruble off the vegies." Such reproofs by a nonvoting member of the Politburo were not to be taken lightly; the prices dropped as prescribed. That night, recalls a witness, as the boss' words were repeated in Moscow kitchens, Yeltsin "became a legend."

In the meantime, the Moscow party *apparat*, whose undying hatred Yeltsin earned almost instantaneously, ran for cover under the wings of the guardian angel of party professionals, Yegor Kuzmich Ligachev, at that time was the "second" secretary of the party and Gorbachev's deputy. A fellow Siberian and a former party boss of the Tomsk province, Ligachev—ironically, in light of his future relationship with Yeltsin—was the Pol-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

itburo member who pushed the hardest for Yeltsin's transfer to Moscow.

A series of clashes between the two men followed. Yeltsin saw his initiatives stifled, his designs overruled, his proposals dismissed. Frustrated in his efforts to bring what he considered a true perestroika to the capital, Yeltsin sent Gorbachev a letter of resignation. Gorbachev pocketed the letter and kept postponing the decision. Yeltsin grew more and more anxious. His rendezvous with Russian history was set.

There is a verse in Vassily Grossman's *Life and Fate*, one of the greatest novels about communist totalitarianism:

> "What's your shell made of, my dear?"
> Once I asked a turtle. And was told:
> "It's of fear. Stored and hardened fear.
> There is nothing stronger in the world."

Yeltsin's decision to crack his own shell of fear—a very personal and painful step, the agony of which nearly cost him his life—turned out to be more than one man's liberation. It ushered in a new, terminal era of Soviet communism. What happened on October 21, 1987, remains the pinnacle of Yeltsin's political life. Regardless of what follows, the events of that morning alone assure his place in history.

AT THE CLOSING of a largely ritualistic Central Committee meeting on that day, Yeltsin requested the floor and delivered a speech in which he deplored the absence of "revolutionary change" in the party *apparat*; warned about popular disappointment with perestroika because of the lack of results; noted Gorbachev's budding cult of personality, and, finally, complaining of the lack of support from the Politburo, asked to be released from the post of the first secretary of the Moscow City Committee.

As he walked back through a stunned silence, his "heart pounding and ready to burst through the rib cage," he wrote in his memoirs, Yeltsin prepared himself for an "organized" and "methodical" slaughter.[3] And that is precisely what happened. Following Gorbachev's cue, one Central Committee member after another got up to denounce Yeltsin. Three weeks later, the ritual slaughter was repeated at a plenum of the Moscow City Committee, to which Yeltsin, in the hospital with a nervous and physical breakdown and pumped with tranquilizers, was summoned by Gorbachev.

Three months later, Gorbachev called again, this time offering Yeltsin a Council of Ministers-rank position in charge of construction. The offer was a curious one. Why did Gorbachev not deliver a coup de grace, by making Yeltsin ambassador to Mongolia, as Khrushchev did with Molotov? The answer is most likely to be found in the role that Gorbachev, the master tactician, must have assigned to Yeltsin from the beginning. Yeltsin is to Gorbachev what Medusa's head was to Perseus: when Gorbachev reaches inside the bag and produces Yeltsin, the "conservatives" freeze in fear. By comparison, Gorbachev looks supremely moderate, reasonable, and well worthy of support. Gorbachev needed Yeltsin in Moscow, handy, within reach. As Yeltsin perceptively commented on numerous occasions: "If I did not exist, Gorbachev would have to invent me."

At the same time, the destination of Yeltsin's institutional exile was not, as the Soviet papers in the pre-glasnost days used to say, accidental. Alongside food, medical care, finance, and crime, housing is the most explosive issue in grass roots politics: over one hundred million Soviet citizens (every third one!) have less living space per person than even the miserable Soviet "sanitary norm" allows—nine square meters per person. In Moscow, as *Izvestia* has acknowledged, 344,800 families are on the waiting list for housing—12 percent of all families in the Soviet capital; 282,900 families in Leningrad (20 percent); 208,000 in Kiev (26 percent).

Gorbachev knew Yeltsin better than Yeltsin knew himself. The general secretary was convinced that Yeltsin would reemerge,

[3] *Against the Grain* (New York: Summit Books, 1990), p. 102.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

no matter how crushing the blow was, and Perseus would recover Medusa's head. And Gorbachev was right: only a few months after his political demise, Yeltsin began campaigning for a seat on the 1988 Extraordinary Party Conference. Thus, at the age of fifty-six, Yeltsin became the first politician in sixty-four years (since the time of Lenin's death), who openly took on the Big Boss, lost, and rose again. A new era of Soviet political history began. A year later, in the elections to the Congress of People's Deputies, Yeltsin triumphed over his *apparat*-supported opponent, polling close to 90 percent of the Moscow vote.

"There is one story and one story only/ That will prove worth your telling," Robert Graves advised budding poets. Yeltsin the budding politician did discover his own story, and it has proved remarkably well worth his telling. It is a story of extramonetary remuneration of the Soviet bureaucrats—the "social justice" issue, to use the currently accepted euphemism. No feeling is more widely and more passionately shared in today's Soviet Union than hatred of the political elite's privileges: all those special drug, book, and department stores, special box offices, special hospitals, special food rations, special food processing plants, even special farms where this food is produced.[4]

Setting an example, and earning enormous political capital, Yeltsin gave up all his ministerial-rank privileges—including, in May of last year, the holy of holies of the Russian perks, a dacha. After thirty years of *apparat* privileges, he told *Moscow News*, it is not easy to cope: "It is hard when your wife stands in lines for hours to buy food," Yeltsin complained, "or when something is not available in the store, or when drugstores have no medicine and your grandson's temperature is over 40 Centigrade."

Yeltsin's constituency of the reform-oriented democratic "progressives" and *hoi polloi*—united by hatred of the stupidity, rapacity, and privileges of the party and government bureaucrats—may prove only temporary. And small surprise if it does: progress and populism are rarely compatible. "Our political life," writes Nikolai Shmeliov, perhaps the most authoritative of the Soviet radical economists, "has one sad feature: the most pronounced are levelling trends, born out of the ideology of equality of all in poverty." Along with meat, clean towels, 800 grams of soap a month, refrigerators, and shoes, the closing of *kooperativy* (small private enterprises) was at the top of the list of demands of striking miners last July. A huge segment of Yeltsin's constituency are social Luddites—scared of the havoc, the uncertainty, the need for initiative and self-reliance that radical economic reform will bring. Undoubtedly there are Yeltsin supporters among those who burn private farms and vandalize cooperative shops and restaurants.

Most important of all, Yeltsin's populism appeals to those who hate the neighbor who does better than they, no matter how hard he or she works. Yet earnings-based inequality is both the key condition and the assured outcome of any radical economic reform. As Gavriil Popov, a leading Soviet economist who in April was elected the mayor of Moscow, has put it in *Literaturnaya Gazeta*: "The increase in wealth for some will become the basis for raising the standard of living for all." Yet it is precisely the increased "social layering based on property" that bothers Yeltsin the Leveller. What Popov rightly sees as the "key problem" of perestroika—"the contradiction between the democracy that we need and the growth of economic inequality"—is bound, sooner or later, to split the Yeltsin constituency. And contributing to the rift between the pro-reform progressives and the populists is the age-long bitter mistrust between the liberal Russian intelligentsia and the *narod*, the people, on whose behalf the intelligentsia is supposedly laboring.

[4] A "commission on privileges," created by the Supreme Soviet, confirmed the existence of privileges in the following areas: "health care, leisure, trade, transportation, housing, culture, pensions and services" (*Izvestia*, September 29, 1989).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Because of his constituency, Yeltsin is uncharacteristically reticent on the key subject of property. Philosopher Igor Kliamkin, who is among the most perceptive observers of Soviet politics today, notes that Yeltsin talks about the market "through clenched teeth." Thus Yeltsin tells the *New York Times* that he is for "something close to" private ownership of farmland. In his memoirs, he states that the issue of property divides "the so-called left and right" but does not indicate where he stands on the issue. The *Financial Times* reports Yeltsin supporting "private ownership of the production means and land"—but only in general and with a proviso that "positive aspects of socialism" are incorporated.

The other pillar of Yeltsin's political strategy, meanwhile, is safe from cracks and grows stronger by the day. These days, to attack Gorbachev is almost as advantageous as attacking the party itself. And as Gorbachev's popularity declines, Yeltsin's critique of the general secretary grows progressively sharper and more personal. Perestroika has "failed," Yeltsin told the *Financial Times*, because "the leadership" failed. Moreover, "five years should be enough for a president to prove his worth. He hasn't fulfilled his obligation to the pledges to the people." Yeltsin's memoirs cast Gorbachev as "inconsistent" and "timid," a man who "loves" half-measures and "semi-decisions."

Yeltsin seems to regard the political mileage to be gotten out of the "social justice" issue as far from exhausted. The single longest topical passage in his book is eleven pages devoted to the privileges of the top party leadership. Toward the end of the passage, Yeltsin lurches for Gorbachev's political jugular: "Why has Gorbachev been unable to change this? I believe the fault lies in the basic cast of his character. He likes to live well, in comfort and luxury." And—a twist of the knife—"what about [Raisa Gorbachev's] ZIL limo? My daughter, at her workplace, is given one small cake of soap per month. My wife. . . has to spend two or three hours a day in shopping lines. . . . " Was the entire book written for this paragraph? If so, it is probably worth it: when Yeltsin's autobiography is published in the Soviet Union, the paragraph will do more to boost his popularity and sink that of Gorbachev than anything else in the book.

IN THE MEANTIME, Gorbachev continued his cat-and-mouse game: now letting Yeltsin roam loose and even protecting him, now throwing him high in the air. When the "conservative" majority of the First Congress of People's Deputies last May failed to elect Yeltsin to the permanent legislature (the Supreme Soviet), Gorbachev acceded to—possibly arranged—a resignation of one of the elected deputies in order that Yeltsin take his seat. That summer Gorbachev authorized a televised address by Yeltsin to striking miners. When last fall *Pravda* reprinted an Italian newspaper article that accused Yeltsin of drinking non-stop during his U.S. tour and spending honoraria on jeans and VCR's instead of charities, Gorbachev sacked Editor-in-Chief Viktor Afanasiev.

Yet on October 16, just a few weeks later, Gorbachev, in his capacity as the chairman of the Supreme Soviet, humiliated Yeltsin during a nationally televised session. He had the minister of Internal Affairs report on a bizarre incident: Yeltsin, the minister alleged, appeared late at night and soaking wet at a police station in the exclusive country house retreat of the Moscow elite, stating that he had been kidnapped and thrown off the bridge by unknown assassins.

Yeltsin said later that he himself had concealed the episode for fear of provoking protest strikes and riots by his supporters. At the time, though, his response in the Supreme Soviet was suspiciously confused: he said that nobody had tried to harm him and that the whole episode was "his private life." (A rumor began circulating in Moscow, meanwhile, that he was visiting his mistress who threw a bucketful of water over him.)

Yeltsin's detractors are not confined solely to the *apparat*. Some in the Moscow intelligentsia are skeptical, even alarmed. Ac-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cording to *Novy Mir*, they see in Yeltsin a "neo-Bolshevik," the "central point" of whose program—redistribution of goods and services accumulated by the ruling class—was "the leitmotif of all Bolsheviks, both before and after the [1917] revolution." His program, the article reports, is seen by some as a "collection of primitive quasi-solutions."

The Moscow intelligentsia is heavily overrepresented among the sources of Western correspondents in the Soviet Union, so its weariness of Yeltsin permeates Western media. Nonetheless, the intelligentsia's attitudes are themselves somewhat suspect.

Perhaps nowhere in the world does there exist a more snobbish intelligentsia than in Moscow. A wrong accent, a gesture that is not *comme il faut*, or (God forbid) grammatic deficiency are all valid reasons for excommunication. (Although Gorbachev speaks better Russian than any Soviet leader since Lenin, without the heavy Georgian accent of Stalin and the Ukrainian of Khrushchev and Brezhnev, he too has taken his lumps. His fall from grace began at the televised proceedings of the First Congress of People's Deputies last summer, when he several times used the incorrect third person plural form of the verb *klast'*, to put down, saying *lozhut*, instead of *kladut*.)

A son of a Siberian peasant, Yeltsin can hardly count on acceptance by Moscow intellectuals. In his book, Yeltsin notes that Muscovites "make no attempt" to hide their "snobbery and arrogance" toward provincials and that, prior to his move to Moscow, his rare encounters with the inhabitants of the capital left "a nasty taste" in his mouth.

Another, more powerful, source of the intelligentsia's resentment is deeper and perhaps subconscious. For generations, it cast itself as fighters and martyrs for the *narod*. But, with a few notable exceptions, the intellectuals know nothing of the *narod*. They do not know how "the people" live, do not share their habits, and (except in books) do not speak "the people's" language. Yeltsin, on the other hand, is a voice of the tired, hungry, huddled masses of that second-rate Third World nation called the Soviet Union. To the intelligentsia, Yeltsin is the epitome of mass democracy—something for which the intellectuals ostensibly struggle, but whose arrival threatens their exalted status. At stake for the intelligentsia is its place behind the throne, its right and duty to advise the state on matters of culture, its ruling the arts by virtue of government's mandate—all privileges that many of their Western counterparts can, and do, only dream about.

For better or worse, however, these detractors of Yeltsin cannot stop him, not now. He began this year as one of the five chairmen of the Interregional Group of Deputies, an increasingly disloyal and numerically growing "left" opposition to Gorbachev in the Congress of People's Deputies. In May he won a narrow victory to become president of the Russian republic, thus securing a powerful political base. This year may be the one he has prepared for all his life.

The central, most fateful aspect of Soviet political life today is a desperate race between two parallel processes: the disintegration of the Soviet economy (and the concomitant delegitimation and demise of the current political regime); and the emergence of new political structures enjoying popular support and consent. If the former outpaces the latter—if the economy collapses before a legitimate central government is installed—then this giant land, this military "superpower" in possession of over 12,000 nuclear charges, is likely to plunge into violent political chaos, a Lebanon-like war of all against all.

It is no longer possible to talk about the Soviet "national" economy. Shortages and inflation make the ruble less and less fit to serve as a medium of exchange. Moscow now leaves local party and state leaders to fend for themselves if—or, rather, when—food riots break out. Regions more and more often refuse to surrender their produce to central ministries; they export goods only when barter offerings of other regions look attractive—or when hard currency is paid. In March, for the first time in my memory, a Soviet economist writing in *Kommunist*, an official Soviet

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

publication (and a theoretical journal of the Central Committee at that), used the term "dollarization" to describe the process.[5]

Perhaps the most troubling consequence of economic Lebanization of the Soviet Union is a steady decline of grain deliveries for all-Union distribution. Thus, while last year's overall grain harvest was 16 million tons higher than in 1988, the amount of grain sold to the state was lower than in 1988. And this in a country where every third loaf of bread, as A. Sizov acknowledged in *Kommunist*, is already made from imported grain.

In a country which is already seventy-seventh in the world in terms of personal consumption, these economic abstractions have translated into another turn of a downward spiral—this time perilously close to the bottom. Of 211 essential food products, Vassily Selunin reports in *Glasnost*, only 23 were available at state stores as of last summer—and perhaps even fewer now. In order to buy children's soap in a department store in the ancient Russian city of Kostroma, one must show a stamp in one's internal passport to prove that one has children under three years old.

THE SOVIET UNION'S only chance to win the deadly race with a total economic collapse and violent political anarchy is a government vested with authority and having enough legitimacy to administer the very bitter pill of radical economic reform. The creation of such a government is the central and most urgent issue of Soviet politics today. Gorbachev's much touted "grab" for the "emergency powers" of the presidency is thus irrelevant. Back in March 1985, as the newly elected chief of the country's sole and dictatorial political party, Gorbachev had immeasurably more real power than any presidency could procure him. Today, his "emergency" power may best be compared to that of the captain of the *Titanic*.

Neither the Congress of People's Deputies—a third of whose delegates were appointed by the party-controlled "social organizations"—nor Gorbachev himself has the required legitimacy. The pace of economic disintegration is such that it may be too late now even for "roundtable" negotiations of the Polish type. The only means of creating a legitimate government is for Gorbachev to dissolve the Congress, resign the presidency, and proceed with direct multi-party national elections of a new parliament and a new president. And Gorbachev may well be reasonably assured of gaining the presidency—if Yeltsin, already installed as the president of the Republic of Russia, decides not to challenge him. In that case, Yeltsin could savor the exquisite revenge of watching his nemesis struggling as the head of a disintegrating Soviet Union.

If such elections do not materialize by the end of the year, three other scenarios suggest themselves. The first is a democratic, procapitalist revolution that would finish what Gorbachev started but took too long to complete. The second is an authoritarian, anticapitalist, anti-Western, "neo-Bolshevik" revolution. And third: a KGB-military junta of "national salvation." While Yeltsin's role in the third case is hard to imagine, except as that of a victim, he is well-positioned to occupy a prominent, perhaps even central, place in the other two.

In public opinion polls, Yeltsin is second only to Gorbachev in popularity, while his "negatives" are even slightly lower than those of the president. He has little advertised but strong and growing ties to the military—another source of the intelligentsia's concern. During his campaign for nomination to the Congress of People's Deputies, Yeltsin was ferreted about the country in military planes. He is a key organizer of the Democratic Front, one of whose institutional members is *Shchit* (or Shield), a union of radical "left" officers. A Russian "Red Carnations" revolution led by the junior military, à la the April 25, 1975, revolution in Portugal, is a very

[5]Egor Gaidar, "Trudny vibor" ("The hard choice"), *Kommunist* (January 1990), p. 25.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

plausible subscenario of a democratic revolution.

But would Yeltsin lead a populist revolt? His critics say he very well might. They point out, for example, his flirtation with *Pamyat*, the nationalist, neo-Bolshevik organization whose representatives he met during his tenure in Moscow. (Yeltsin claims that he met with the *Pamyat* demonstrators, who occupied Red Square, only because he wished to defuse a tense situation and prevent police crackdown.) A more serious, and persuasive, argument in favor of Yeltsin-the-authoritarian stems from the ill-defined nature of his objectives. What does he want beyond the elimination of privileges, the dissolution of the *apparat*, and the effective abolition of the party monopoly on power? The character of his constituency and its mood give rise to gloomy predictions, like those of Andronik Migranian in *Novy Mir*:

> The past is shameful, the present is monstrous, and the future cannot be defined, cannot be predicted. In such a psychological state the masses are ready to accept any leader who will say: "I know what to do and how to do it." And . . . the Yeltsin phenomenon . . . is explained by this psychological condition of the people. . . . The popular mood that has made Yeltsin the populist leader is very dangerous. . . . Further deterioration of the general situation in the country will further widen the circle of the "decisive" people ready to support any leader offering simple, quick and effective decision in the name of social justice. [But] the course on re-distribution of the present goods is a course into the blind alley of a new slavery. Soon there will be nothing left to redistribute. And terror will follow.

But whichever of the two scenarios Yeltsin would prefer, he is ready for battle. The strapping six-footer, a former national championship volleyball player, is fully recovered from his post-plenum breakdown. He gets up at five, reads till seven, does his calisthenics, takes a cold shower, and works until one in the morning. (On his U.S. tour last fall, Yeltsin challenged President Bush to a tennis match.)

In speeches and interviews in the United States last September, Yeltsin repeated over and over again that Gorbachev has at most a year to improve the economic situation—or vacate the space at the top for a more successful politician. "If not, then what happens?" asked Jim Lehrer last September. "A revolution from below will begin," answered Yeltsin.

Half a year later, Yeltsin told the *Associated Press*:

> The time of compromises and half-measures is past. We are sitting on top of a volcano, and very soon neither Gorbachev, nor anyone else will be able to control the events. The people will take their fate in their own hands, as it happened in Eastern Europe. If we are lucky, everything will happen orderly, as in GDR, Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria. But what happens if the situation develops in the Rumanian pattern? Bloodshed? Tragedy?

"Would you like to be President of the Soviet Union some day?" Jim Lehrer pressed him. "It's a possibility," Yeltsin answered, "if I am not too old and have strength."

Dr. Johnson is said to have remarked about Lord Chesterfield: "This man, I thought, had been a Lord among wits, but, I find, he is only a wit among Lords." Only time will tell whether Boris Nikolaevich Yeltsin is a democrat among the populists or only an authoritarian populist among the democrats. Now we may not have to wait long to find out.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

WHAT IN THE NAME OF GORBACHEV IS GOING ON IN THE SOVIET UNION?

For the only on–the–scene answer to this question, read the bi–monthly, English–language edition of GLASNOST news-magazine. Each issue contains the most important articles from the two previous numbers of the Russian edition, which is put out in Moscow by dissident journalists. With over 200 courageous reporters throughout the Soviet Union, we provide eyewitness accounts of such big stories as the breakup of the Soviet empire—of mass slaughters in Azerbaijan, of one–million–strong demonstrations in Armenia, of country–wide strikes in coal–mining and other industries. Filled with unique photographs, GLASNOST is for general readers with an interest in a subject—the Soviet Union—which looms larger in the news than ever before.

GLASNOST

Subscribe now!

Now $24! ~~$48~~ for a One–Year Subscription!
Only $44 for Two Years.

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

(Add $9 per year for regular foreign mail. Add $18 per year for foreign air mail.)

Please make all checks payable to the Center for Democracy in the U.S.S.R.
Mail to: *Glasnost* Newsmagazine; c/o Center for Democracy in the U.S.S.R.;
358 West 30th Street, Suite 1–A; New York, N.Y. 10001.

Phones: (212) 967–2027 or 967–6073.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Look Homeward

Michael Vlahos

AS WE RUSH to embrace the new world, we have little time to reflect on what we leave behind. We should, because we haven't left it yet. We are in a transition, a bridge time; we sense a new reality, but still live in the old. And when we talk—about change, the future, America's purpose—we speak in the old language. Its powerful codewords still rule our subconscious. Most of us have only known this reality, this paradigm. When we think of beginnings, trying to imagine a new creation, we describe it with the slogans of the late 1930s and 1940s, when this old world was being built. That reality grew out of the received truths and myths of world war, prelude and postlude: Munich, Hitler-Stalin, the Bomb, Berlin. When Charles Krauthammer and Patrick Buchanan speak, as they have recently in these pages, it is with the passions of another time. They replicate the great argument in the drama that made that world: and suddenly, it is internationalism versus isolationism all over again. But only the language, the imagery.

Fifty years ago, the terms of debate hinged on the needs of America against the survival of the civilized world. Abstention from the world balance of power was then our national norm. Surely, the world was in trouble; but in saving the world, what would be left of us? And could it even be saved?

Today, engagement is the norm. The world has, arguably, been saved. The Krauthammer-Buchanan exchange, however, is not just the old debate reversed. It is not, after all, the existential question reprised: to engage or to abstain. The era we are now departing has changed that forever. How?

When the postwar paradigm found its liturgy in NSC–68, world engagement meant a protracted, Manichaean struggle, at the end of which a U.S. global culture would triumph. The Free World would become one world, with the U.S.-bequeathed United Nations as its government.

Well folks, it didn't quite turn out that way. The Manichaean part may indeed be over, but the world looks nothing like what the paradigm-creators expected back in the 1940s. Democracy is catching, but not as Americanism. They are not our little eaglets. Our world government-to-be has been forever despoiled, and our allies now emerge—the EC and Japan—as equal world powers. This frets us because, along the way, we developed a taste for superpower. This is the unnamed, latent thought in today's debate about national purpose: what began as a crusade is ending as the lament of godhead lost. "We are still a superpower!" comes the cry. But the inner theme is loss.

Michael Vlahos is director of the Center for the Study of Foreign Affairs, U.S. Department of State. The views expressed here are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the U.S. government.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Krauthammer turns Wilsonianism into frank imperialism, and he is up-front: "universal dominion." There is no better restatement of the postwar vision of a U.S. global culture, except now one supposes it is to be forced on others, not embraced by them. Has he asked the EC and Japan if they want to abridge their new-found integrity as world players to suit yet another ploy for U.S. domination? Will the Third World applaud our plan to gradually use their dependency to suck them into subservience? Buchanan wrestles mostly with the loss of U.S. power, responding both that it doesn't matter and that it isn't happening. To reassure himself he quotes Nakasone's condescending scrap for U.S. face-saving: "The twenty-first century will also be the American century."

Why do they both spend so much time worrying about our place in the world? You see, it really doesn't matter what we want. The world is going its own way, no matter how earnest our entreaties to the contrary. And much more important, America is going its own way too. World change unlocks change here, long repressed by the needs of global mission. What we—the beltway insiders, the archons of the Washington clubs, the fatted scions of an old power establishment—really fear is the loss of our social ranking, of our special imperial trusteeship when empire is gone. Will we still be important? What will happen to the imperial city now?

BEFORE WE ponder our own fate, let's look at what is really happening in the world. In our rhetoric, global crusade always announced its own eventual disestablishment. Kennedy spelled out the vision when he called for a "world safe for diversity." We simply assumed that this would be one-dimensional diversity: native garb and music, American democratic values—this is the "multipolar" world for which we waited. To turn early Christian theology about the nature of God just a bit, we looked to "one world, many operators."

The new world reality, however, is one of many worlds; or more correctly, a pantheon of many realities. In spite of the power and the glory of U.S. culture, the decolonized went their own way. Europe and Japan stuck by us. . . had they any choice? They were strategic dependents helpless in the face of raw evil. Now the evil mask is torn away, and both EC-Europe and Japan are moving toward self-realization. They are already our rough equal as economies; the recognition that they are full-fledged world powers is not far away. We remain warrior chieftain only through the transition.

After the transition, we may imagine a power balance built around three world powers—North America (USCAN), the EC, and Japan. These centers will drive the world economy, and will retain some measure of collegiality. They will also be engaged in ferocious competition—in which economic scrimmage over advantage in trade and technology will be the new game on the playing field of national security. It should be a time of great global economic growth; but however much we keep to fraternal handshakes, this competition will be the greatest challenge to the American way of life in the early twenty-first century. Europe and Japan will no longer be allies save in name.

Three great powers (a tier down from world powers) will cluster in Asia: Russia, China, and India. They will have roughly equivalent GNPs, science and technology, and military power. Russia may be more advanced but less martially inclined if it sheds restive republics; if it clings to empire, its army will be bigger, but its economy weaker. Indian growth will be steady; China should surge if it gets a popular new dynasty.

Other culture areas will remain diffuse, with some regional powers dominating and others competing: for example, South Africa will dominate Niger-Kordofanian Africa, and Indonesia the Austronesian; while the Arab-Islamic world will find no leader among sullen rivals.

The United States and Canada will come closer than ever through free trade union, and eventually pull in Mexico. USCAN will have no rival in its world, and will be free to move

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

flexibly and forcefully in others. After the transition, we should be disentangled from our overseas "trip wires" (as Buchanan suggests). So unencumbered, our strategic freedom of action will grow.

But this is all surface image. What are we doing? What are we all about? The answer to America's national purpose is to be found right here at home. Our approach to the world has always reflected our domestic agenda. This was just as true for the postwar era as any other. As we debate the course of world change, we forget that our old global mission mirrored a domestic paradigm, created by FDR and sustained by a coherent party system and political establishment. It was a political model for America built on the bedrock premise of big government, or better yet, a crusading state that would lead America and the world to the Promised Land.

This vision's time is past. Its political establishment has lost the pulse of its own people. (Need we belabor the Democrats in their agony?) And the vision's promise itself gave out more than a decade ago. Failure in Vietnam was, after all, only the foreign reflection of a gathering failure of big government's domestic mobilization, its Great Society.

Americans today feel that this nation has lost its way. We see a welter of single issues burning in the political ether—from abortion to racism and its cures, to drugs, education, and the environment. With the S&L crisis, we talk about a failure of government, and now two-thirds of Americans want length of congressional service limited. With abortion, we rage over moral decay versus yet further encroachment of government on individual liberty. With drugs, we are like helpless penitents scourging ourselves, in the face of a social plague that our great system cannot cure. With education, we are perplexed by a vast federal octopus actually abetting a decline in knowledge and skills among our youth. With the environment, many see the American Garden itself despoiled. Different vantages, same judgment: America corrupted. But these are only the fragments of visions of America yet to be patterned. They are like the tiny pieces of a mosaic, each expressing an intense part of the whole, linked by a pattern seen only from a distance. We do not yet have the distance.

When it comes to foreign policy, many Americans also feel that our own needs have been postponed by the claims of the great struggle, that we have sacrificed so long for others only to find ourselves weakened and astray. This is the unspoken content of the codeword "peace dividend," of cartoons showing Germany and Japan as the real postwar victors, of so many lamentations about national decline. Our foreign policy musings today are shot through with domestic melancholy.

In fact, it is almost irrelevant to talk about America's purpose when it is right here in front of us. The American idea is today at risk, and continuing an empty world crusade could kill it. Who are we? What do we stand for? What kind of society are we building? Renewing ourselves must come before any foreign relations: it must be our first priority. And world change that (for awhile) banishes old threats not only allows, but encourages, America to remake itself.

THIS BRINGS US full circle to the foreign policy debate inside the beltway about America's purpose. The debaters are out of touch with the people they serve. The observer might even infer that we have come merely to serve ourselves. Accreting over half a century, Washington has become something both aberrant and unexampled in American eyes: an imperial metropole. The purpose for which it was established—internal as well as imperial state mobilization—no longer lives. But the great city does, resented as it is by the rest of the U.S. This city and its establishment live to defend a fading reality, thus its inner debate cannot really address America's future course.

This truth must not be lost: What we do in the world for the good must come from a collective vision, strong and new within us.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In the fifty years since our last Big Change (as Max Lerner calls it), the elite has become comfortable in, and dependent upon, our perpetual starring role: "United States, Superpower." The role became the end in itself, and for many it still is.

"Superpower" doesn't matter. The greatness of the American idea does. The urgent task ahead is one of remaking, reinterpreting. Choosing an American agenda for a new century outweighs all foreign claims. We simply cannot speak to the world until we can speak to ourselves.

What does this suggest for our actual approach to the world? First we must ditch the old debate of the 1930s and 1940s. The point now is not isolationism versus internationalism: we are strong today, not beaten down and afraid as we were in 1935. We could hardly be isolationists now if we tried. But no matter how hard we push, we cannot bring to life the universal spell of an American global culture. An opposite force is sweeping the world: cultures repressed by Free World universalism (especially in Europe and Japan) are finding themselves again.

And they will be at best associates, not friends. The basis for trust will not pass the bar of the end of our postwar reality. We may have no enemies, but we will have no real allies either. Yes, they have imbibed a "democratic spirit" that we have spread. But once it is *their democracy*, it ceases to look to us for inspiration, and its political forms become more referent to native traditions. Arguably, as culture areas go their own way, so increasingly will their politics.

The practical foreign policy debate we should be having is how to deal with a time of parallel realities. The old paradigm is fading but it's not yet dead. Paradoxically, its claim on our passions is all the more wrenching (a death grip?) in its ending time. The new world reality still awaits the event to call it forth.

During the transition, we must try to imagine the next frame of reference while our day-to-day, operational energies are screwed to the task of gradually deconstructing the postwar world. This is the key to understanding the transition we are now in and the new world to come. The issues that seize us today are ones involving merely the managing of transition. They are not preparing us for what's ahead.

The transition period will demand the utmost of us: vigilance, forbearance, strength. We must see to the dismantling of Soviet (and then American) power in Europe, and stand guard as the Soviet slide works its way of imperial decline. When this transition ends, the new geopolitics can become American strategic opportunity. In it,

- What kind of challenges and threats do we face?
- How do we define national interest and responsibility?
- What military capabilities will be needed to defend us?

First, the security challenges we will face after the transition (post–2000) will be more moderate, if still significant. A national competition over technology will begin to describe a new balance of power with our former allies (the EC and Japan). Great powers and regional powers will fret and jostle. Economic bargaining will drive power diplomacy. Now there is no denying that the spirit of the age has turned against war; as in other true postwar times, we can expect war as a legitimate political tool to be in hiding for at least a decade. That peacetime bloom will darken, however, and the world of the next century will again find uses for military force, and in places, like space, where there are no earthly battle rules and precedents.

Second, national interest and responsibility should be to ourselves first, and then to the promotion of a kind of global collegiality. We may wish to intrude ourselves at will (by sea, air, and space) in local potboilers, but we will intervene on the ground very selectively. U.S. interests will remain global, and we should stay interested in all that happens affecting the global balance. But we will have the flexibility and relative strategic distance to choose when and how to get involved, if at all. In a pluralistic world where there are

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

many powers, in which we may have no sworn enemies but also few real friends, a strategy of selective engagement gives the United States (or USCAN) the most leverage and the best chance to achieve our broader national goals through mediation rather than intervention.

Third, we must keep the high ground. We will need non-nuclear, high-technology, low-manpowered forces that we can bring to bear to support a strategy of global selective engagement. Our current advantage over all others in space and naval systems must be the focus of future American national security. Dominance in space and in the oceans will also support us in international technology competition; it will in effect be our insurance against the worst consequences of "multipolarity."

Let's face it: we cannot control world change to suit us; we cannot keep as our own the old world we've grown to like. The new world gives us room, however. The U.S. will not mature to be just another standard, historical cookie-cutter power on the scene. We will draw strength from the energies released in our renewal, and continue to offer ourselves to the world. We can still, if we seize its primacy as our new mission, do best by looking again at ourselves, and the idea that made us.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A War Against Fire

The Uses of "Global Warming"

Russell Seitz

The most savage controversies are those as to which there is no good evidence either way.
—Bertrand Russell

AT THE TURN of the century, a Swedish Nobel Laureate, Svante Arrhenius, laid the cornerstone of what is popularly called "the greenhouse effect"—that one of the principal gaseous products of fire, carbon dioxide, can absorb radiant warmth and trap it in the earth's atmosphere. In the hothouse environment of the popular media, this observation has blossomed into the most fiercely debated, and perhaps most widely feared, scientific phenomenon of the day. As *Science* magazine observed in a March 30, 1990, editorial:

> Virtually everyone, children included, is concerned about global climate change and especially about the greenhouse effect. They have learned of increases in carbon dioxide. They have been told repeatedly that temperatures will increase 9°F. Political pressure is mounting to take action regardless of cost, and to take action now.

This much is familiar to any observer within reach of the popular media. But what follows is *not*:

> But how good is the evidence, and how likely is substantial global warming? When might it happen? Applying the customary standards of scientific inquiry, one must conclude that there has been more hype than solid facts. . . .
>
> Modeling of global climate is. . . largely concentrated on examining effects of doubling the atmospheric content of greenhouse gases. As might be expected, the answers they get are functions of the models they employ. The spread is from 1.5° to 5°C; that is, there is great uncertainty. If one examines the subject, one finds virtually unanimous agreement that the models are deficient. . . .
>
> What have been the warming effects, if any, of anthropogenic gases? The typical answer is 0.5°C. But the answer depends on what time interval is chosen. There was substantial increase in temperature from 1880 to 1940. However, from 1940 until the 1960s, temperatures dropped so much as to lead to predictions of a coming ice age. New, precise satellite data raise further questions about warming. From 1979 to 1988 large temperature variability was recorded, but no obvious temperature trend was noted during the 10-year period.[1]
>
> A fashionable estimate of the time when

Russell Seitz, from 1985 to 1989, was a visiting scholar and associate of Harvard University's Center for International Affairs. His writings have appeared in *Science*, *Nature*, and *Technology Review* as well as the *Economist*, *Foreign Affairs*, the *New York Times*, and *The National Interest*.

[1] R.W. Spencer and J.R. Christy, "Precise Monitoring of Global Temperature Trends from Satellites," *Science* 247 (March 30, 1990): 1558.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

doubling of atmospheric CO_2 will occur is the middle of the next century. But past predictions of energy usage have been notoriously inaccurate.

What should be the national response to the above uncertainties?. . . whatever we do should be based on well-thought-out long-range goals. It should not result from a half-baked political response.

Almost everything about this statement sits oddly with representations of the greenhouse effect in the popular media. Where *Science* speaks of conflicting studies and ambiguous results, the popularizers of the greenhouse effect deliver dire warnings with the utmost certitude. Where the one counsels a cautious political response, the other urges instant, even draconian intervention. In the name of the greenhouse effect, some environmentalists are demanding a 30 percent rollback in CO_2 emissions by the year 2000. They seem oblivious to the enormity of what they are demanding: a war on that most elemental of human discoveries—fire itself.

Why this enormous gap between what is known and what is urged? Why do most scientists lack conviction, where many laymen are full of passionate intensity? To answer, we might begin by way of reviewing a most important aspect of the greenhouse effect—the extent of our ignorance.

Why It's Not So Simple

THE ATMOSPHERE is among the earth's most complex dynamic systems: subtle in its chemistry, chaotic in its flow. It interacts with everything from the solar wind to the deep oceans. It is subject to insults great and small, brief and enduring, from men and meteorites, volcanoes and termites, wildfires and algal blooms—a list without end.

The scale of all this dynamism is more daunting still. Despite the burgeoning population of the earth, there's still a million tons of air *per capita*. That's a lot of inertia to work against, at least down here in the lower tier of the atmosphere, the troposphere (where it gets colder as you go up). But further upstairs, far above Everest, in the tenuous reaches of the stratosphere (where higher is hotter), lies only a thousandth part of that atmosphere's mass. Our individual "share" of the stratosphere weighs about as much as a ten-yard cube of water and is laced with just a bathtub full of ozone. Hence the dichotomy between concern for an ozone layer that, liquefied, would be no thicker than the ink that you're reading, and the authentic scientific confusion about our capacity rapidly to derange a lower ocean of air that's comparatively as massive as a stack of bibles, the Apocrypha included.

The atmospheric sciences presently lie in limbo between the Newtonian rigor of classical physics and the realm of the undecidable. It is an uncomfortable time. The range of sincere expert opinion broadens with the complexity of the subject at issue. And at the interdisciplinary extreme—global climate—expertise itself dissolves in that most universal of solvents, the theory of complexity.

Just as mathematicians found Kurt Gödel's rigorous proof of the undecidability of some formal propositions dismaying, there is presently no joy for atmospheric scientists in having to testify that the answers policymakers seek are beyond the scope of the available data or the present limits of computational power. Nor is there consolation in the grim realization that their computerized global circulation models have but an ephemeral capacity to predict the future. They can jump forward to model the climate of the distant future on a "what if?" basis, but they can at best conjure up a coarsely realistic picture of global weather that lasts for a few weeks before beginning to disintegrate into gibberish. *Even modeling the evolution of a single thunderhead's birth and death is an absolute tour de force of today's computer modeling.*

By contrast, in reckoning what the whole ensemble of greenhouse gases is up to, we need to know about their transport and interaction with the atmosphere, sunlight, and each other over a range of time scales from microseconds to millennia. We need to mea-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sure reaction rates by the score and to ponder the quantitative meaning of feedbacks both positive and negative. If there *were* world enough and time, individual atmospheric scientists might achieve a combination of physical and geometric intuition approaching certain knowledge of how the earth will respond in the long run to human intervention. But in practice such polymathy scarcely exists—the scientists are reeling in shock at the information explosion they've touched off. Some causes are linked uncontroversially to eventual effects, but many phenomena, like the ozone hole, still get discovered, *not* predicted.

We have as well another major problem. While we have indeed driven carbon dioxide above the historical (hundred-thousand-year) range of its recorded natural fluctuation by about 20 percent (70 parts per million), we have a rather feeble understanding of the paramount greenhouse gas: water vapor. Its clouds fill a tenth of the sky. Its atmospheric concentration is so vastly greater than that of CO_2 as to obscure its effect. And in turn the rest of our significant effluvia—methane, chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), and nitrogen oxides—are dwarfed by the concentration of CO_2 itself.

It is one thing to understand a "straightforward" issue like the destruction of stratospheric ozone by chlorine atoms that, being atoms, just don't wear out. They can take decades to wander back to earth; and in the course of its prolonged residence in the stratosphere, each chlorine atom can slay a long succession of ozone molecules.

This is a scientific commonplace—given a pageful of photochemical reactions, and a few reams of hard data from the Antarctic—and an uncontroversial one. High-flying U–2 and balloon-borne instrumentation has already caught the culprit chlorine *in flagrante* reacting with some ultracold aerosols to bleach a hole in the polar sky. Had CFC emissions continued unabated into the next century, they might have grown into a global problem. The existing local one will likely last for generations.

The case of CFCs is instructive. Out of a growing scientific consensus, the 1987 Montreal Convention on the Reduction of Chemical Emissions was convened, and from it came an international protocol on reducing the release of chemicals that can loft long-lived chlorine into the sky. Ameliorating the problem of CFCs was relatively easy—the bill will come to *only* a few tens of billions of dollars, and the uncertainty factor was resolved to the point of sensible political engagement by *only* a decade of research. But the Greenhouse Effect is a much rougher customer.

Tracking the Invisible Man

TO BEGIN WITH, we're wrestling with not just a dilemma, but the Invisible Man. The temperature records of the last century and a half are by no means geographically uniform and meticulous in their accuracy. Even today's dense grid of meteorological observations is generally biased toward the land and troubled by the self-heating nature of urban areas. Science cannot offer a firm consensus without uncontroversial data, and the half-degree rise of the last century is neither continuous in its course nor a subject of unquestioned belief.

In recent years, three separate and significantly different scientific accounts of the same century-long record of "average" global temperatures, each peer-reviewed and each with its own set of statistical arguments in justification, have been published. They point up, down, and sideways. This is not the dismissal of a century of data, but rather a caution—the warming trend can only be proved by the data, not by a show of hands. The CO_2 is there, but has the atmosphere begun to notice?

Some say they are 99 percent sure *they* can perceive it in the data; some say those who say *that* are completely out of scientific bounds. Others say they see nothing, and many more that they just can't tell—both nature's static-ridden transmission and science's still-crude receivers make the message far from plain. "What bothers a lot of us is,"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

one modeler remarked, ". . . telling Congress things we are reluctant to say ourselves."[2] Wittgenstein put it better: "Whereof we do not know, thereof we cannot speak."

As a window for laymen to peer through, *Global Change and Our Common Future*, published in 1989 by National Academy Press, affords a startling contrast. At one end of the spectrum lies the rhetoric of uncertainty that dominates the hard sciences in the study of global change. It is exemplified by the admission that it will take decades for a clear greenhouse signal to emerge from the noise of climatic variation—witness the dust-bowl drought of the 1930s and the abnormally high Great Lakes water levels of the 1980s—and by the confession that it will take 500 times more computer power to realistically model the course of the quarter-century to come. As one participant in the forum which produced *Global Change*, J.D. Mahlman, noted, "Until such decadal-scale fluctuations are understood or are predictable, it will remain difficult to diagnose the specific signals of permanent climate change as they evolve."

At the other end of the spectrum lies the rhetoric of extinction—life-scientists confidently predicting the climate-driven disappearance of species over the next fifty years. But the objects of their acute concern are the Norwegian mugwort, the Tibetan dung beetle (*Aphodius hodereri*), and other struggling refugees from the last Ice Age.

By the volume's end, it is clear on which side Senator Albert Gore has enlisted: "My purpose is to sound an alarm, loudly and clearly, of imminent and grave danger, and to describe a strategy for confronting this crisis . . . the horrendous prospect of an ecological collapse." He delivered himself of this fine sermon on May Day 1989—the day *before* the forum started. So much for uncertainty.

No one doubts the existence of a dual trend—CO_2 is surely rising. And so must its effect on the trapping and transfer of solar warmth between earth and sky. But global surface temperatures have not risen in lockstep with that rise. Given the ubiquity of water vapor, deciding this issue is rather like asking a panel of tasters to savor the difference between two big urns full of *cafe au lait*. One urn contains five lumps of sugar, the other six—not an easy matter, except to a diabetic. Neither sugar's sweetness nor its palpable metabolic effect is at issue. But it's not an easy call. So too, scientific perceptions of both where the world is, and the timing of its rendezvous with climatic change, are still in part very much a matter of taste.

As is the question of whether scientists from disciplines unrelated to the atmosphere should lend their authority to the promotion of policies that might not prevail on the objective strength—or empirical weakness—of the available evidence. It is a prerogative of the manifesto-writing classes to dragoon as many members as they can of the National Academy of Sciences into signing them (a task too often easier than getting them read). But the resulting *embarras de richesses* can be a problem when the signatories outnumber the real experts in the field. The Union of Concerned Scientists got a majority of the membership to sign a declaration calling for a substantial reduction in global CO_2 emissions by the year 2000. Some members (notably MIT atmospheric physicist Richard Lindzen) were appalled and said so, but they failed to make it onto prime-time television.

Vexation and Videotape

THE MOST important arbiters of the environmental policy debate have accordingly become the public television producers whose products bear the Academy's imprimatur when the credits roll. They have tools at their disposal to amplify and mute at will the discordant voices within the Academy. In a fair fight, a satellite or a supercomputer doesn't stand a chance against the editing and special effects studios of New York and Hollywood. So in terms of political

[2]Professor Alan Robock, University of Maryland, quoted in *Science* 244 (June 2, 1989): 1041–43.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

clout, the real centers of power have moved from the locales of computer climate modeling, to the public television stations of Pittsburgh and Boston.

We are being shown the planet's future by design, in color and in stereo. Yet the production designers seldom condescend to listen to scientists arguing, calculating, and changing their minds. Intelligibility, not content, is the criterion the producers value most. Their goal is to fossilize a script on videotape, not to question the agenda it may compel, when it is reiterated like a commercial on good gray public television.

I have yet to see a computer climate model whose screen is framed by a proscenium, with a data display set to Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* and an explanatory voice-over worthy of a network anchor. Yet in watching some of the most bizarre examples of video hype on climate change (e.g., "The Atmosphere in Crisis" episode of *The Infinite Voyage*), even as my mind is repelled by what is being said, the hair on my head rises together with the rest of the audience's when the clouds part and the music blares. This is semantic aggression run riot—sucking the audience into an hallucinatory Charybdis of swirling images of Gaia profaned.

Mere facts cannot prevail over the raw semiotic power of so excellent a medium, even when its masters may be leading us into a future that may be beyond economic repair—a future in which facts don't count and perceptions of scientific authority can take precedence over mere evidence.

I often find myself exhorting atmospheric scientists to concern themselves with this phenomenal mastery, born of nature television of National Geographic caliber mated with prose worthy of Johnathan Schell. But they just smile ruefully—once was enough—they've seen the genre. In it, computer-animated conceptions of Venus's infernal surface vie with stark visions of all-but-airless Mars as alien stand-ins for earthly greenhouse warming and ozone depletion. Television has little room for doubting scientists. They accordingly know the score. Who, for the sake of skepticism or the honor of the scientific profession, wants to go down in flames like Ceaucescu—locked in the sights of a hostile videocam? The TV crew has got the Maxim gun, and we do not.

So, riding on a wave of videotape, the usage "global warming" is entering the vernacular in the present tense as a mock synonym for "climate change." If only the public read and knew more, and heard and saw less; if only more scientists (and fewer organizations purporting to represent them) endeavored to inform the electorate's considerable curiosity—then we might face better odds in protecting objectivity from the heat of the greenhouse debate.

A DISTURBING reality confronts us: the deliberate creation of a double standard, with one set of facts for internal scientific discourse and another for public consumption. Many who have contributed to it justify their actions by referring to their past diffidence which may have delayed action on ozone depletion. And agonized by the *possibility* of history repeating itself on CO_2, some have cast objectivity aside and openly made common cause with the eco-politicians. But this pathology of the sociology of science is not without a remedy. For the power of television to project unchallengeable images of environmental quality, real or imagined, is utterly undone when the public achieves even a minimal level of quantitative understanding; numeracy and skepticism go hand in hand.

In the absence of numbers candidly conveyed, it is all too easy to transmute supposedly quantitative scientific "facts" about the present into a qualitative legal fiction about the future. Popular coverage of the atmospheric sciences tends to neglect the enormous range of concentration (or dilution) of the various gases involved. That concentration ranges from almost 1 percent by volume in the case of water vapor, to hundreds of parts per million carbon dioxide, to 1 part per million methane, to parts per billion—total chlorine. And, finally,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

down to hundreds of parts per *trillion*—the individual CFCs.[3]

This eight-order-of-magnitude range lends itself to rhetorical abuse on both sides of the debate. So beware equally of headlines proclaiming a fourfold increase in stratospheric chlorine (it has—from 1 part per billion in 1960 to nearly 4 parts per billion in 1990) or dismissing carbon dioxide with a blasé "Greenhouse a Humbug—CO_2 up by less than 1/100th of 1 percent!" This, like "Stratosphere in Crisis—Chlorine Quadruples," may respectively amuse energy lobbyists and substitute refrigerant salesmen, but it profoundly misrepresents the central problem posed by the interaction of climate and technical civilization.

That problem is deep time—deep not on a geological scale, but relative to the timescale of politics. It has taken humanity ten generations to push CO_2 up by a bare 70 parts per million. The previous million years of using fire failed to budge it from its ambient range of fluctuation. The fossil record speaks plainly; as deep as we can drill into ancient ice, there is a clear (but how causal?) linkage of CO_2 and global climate. What wildfires failed to accomplish in the eons before human evolution, the Industrial Revolution has delivered—the acceleration of the history of our interaction with the very air—a *bona fide* change in the second most important greenhouse gas. And equally disturbing, it has delivered that fearsome engine of change, the chainsaw.

The drying effect of not-so-rapid deforestation on the climate of islands was noted by Columbus half a millennium ago.[4] So there is nothing subtle or uncertain about regional climate change in Brazil—strip the land of a rainforest that literally makes rain, and suffer sunstroke in the dust.

I wish CO_2-induced climate change were as simple. Clearly, a sharp-toothed carnivore is on the prowl. But we've yet to see a full-grown specimen. Are we dealing with Snoopy or Cerberus? It's hard to tell: it's only just a foundling pup, and the question of its diet remains to be wrestled with—it might grow into either. But grow it will—slowly, and for a long while undetectably. One of these centuries, we're going to have a real dog in our front yard. But what kind and when? An interdisciplinary consensus on the magnitude of the "greenhouse effect" and its impact on sea levels in the next century won't come cheap—or soon. *Nobody* knows if the synergy of all the ill-defined feedbacks will coincide with high-side outcomes of the many inputs that global systems models require. So some will invoke the presumed prudence of assuming the worst. For others, there is Murphy's Second Law: if everything *must* go wrong, don't bet on it.

Changing the weather on a local scale is categorically a different matter than transforming the climate of the globe. The vast reservoir of CO_2 locked up in limestone dwarfs the atmosphere's burden by many, many thousandfold. The geological unleashing of a fraction of it in the days of the dinosaurs created an atmosphere far richer in CO_2 (and some 5°C warmer) than that of today. The tricky question—how much fossil fuel must be burned to do likewise—has a brief answer: all of it.

The immensity of the world's reservoirs of coal (like limestone) teaches the disparity of scale between what humanity can do in a single generation and what goes on in the course of geological time. We are but builders of pyramids and hewers of wood, not architects of mountains or choreographers of con-

[3]To add to the confusion, the CFCs are roughly 1000 times more efficient than carbon dioxide as absorbers of infrared, making them significant greenhouse gases and major agents of stratospheric *cooling*: some scientists fear the Invisible Man *might* be hiding in his Doppelganger's shadow! While stratospheric cooling is perhaps the *least* controversial of the effects at issue, it is *conspicuously* unpublicized.

[4]I am indebted for both this historical observation and the opening quote to a speech delivered by Presidential Science Adviser D. Allan Bromley before the National Press Club in April 1990.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tinental drift. For all the leverage our technology affords us, we are a species that fits into a single cubic kilometer, with room to spare. In light of the minimalism its editors advocate, the motto of the Whole Earth Catalogue—"We are as gods, so we'd better get good at it"—is stunningly hubristic. But what of the lamentations of those who decry what mischief we can and do see?

Turning Up the Heat

THEREIN LIES the political paradox—what we *can* perceive, we can endeavor to put right. That scar on the Soviet landscape, the vanishing Aral Sea, bears witness to the deranged power of central planning like the mark of Cain. Yet, the diverted rivers that caused it can be swiftly returned to their courses. But the action of the invisible hand of energy economics upon the world is imperceptibly slow. Bear in mind the beaver. Without benefit of godhood, its mindless industry acting over eons has transformed the Canadian landscape into a wilderness of lakes. Likewise, creating a brave new world with an atmosphere transformed by the total depletion of fossil fuel is a labor of generations yet unborn.

We cannot govern the actions of posterity, but we can teach by our example. We can plant trees and stay the hand of mindless deforestation. We can value the richness of biological diversity and recognize the intellectual poverty of sullen indifference to the majesty of nature. But any pretension to oracular foreknowledge of how, over the next quarter century, the earth will respond to our presence lies in the realm not of science but of intuition. And just as surely, any denial that unrestrained CO_2 injection can transform the world within five generations lies beyond the pale of both—especially if China's vast coal reserves are exploited at a *per capita* rate approaching that of the U.S. today.

Politically, I counsel constant vigilance. The salvation of the world affords an enchanting pretext for those predisposed to societal intervention. They have already raised the abolitionist banner, pointing to the prospect of Bangladesh awash and waterskiing down the Mall to the Capitol—a prospect no more likely in my lifetime than nothing happening. My personal expectation—and I reserve the right to change my mind if the evidence does—runs more to centimeter-a-year rises in sea level and a lot more climatic variability than actual temperature rise in that lifetime. There is a precedent of sorts, at the periphery of human history, of a temperature change fully as large (5 to 6°C) as even the most pessimistic estimates for the century to come. It happened some 13,000 years ago, and its onset was so sudden as to raise the contemporary question of climate responding in an abruptly nonlinear way to humanity's growth. Yet mankind muddled through the last Ice Age's death throes and has done rather well since, despite a 100-meter rise in sea levels!

But unlike the regression of the glaciers, a reversal of the course of the Industrial Revolution is not to be meekly borne. An examination of the history of energy policy over the last two decades reveals some unexpected and paradoxical trends in the relationship between environmental awareness and actual emissions of the greenhouse gases.

In the aftermath of the Arab oil shock of the early 1970s, computer models not of climate, but of resource depletion and energy costs, played a major role in determining energy policies. The most egregious projections, immortalized in textbooks by neo-Malthusians like Paul Ehrlich, had the United States running out of natural gas in 1989. Yet they inspired the National Academy of Sciences to commission a massive study with conclusions (promote energy efficiencies and develop coal and oil shale resources) reflecting a belief in continuous energy cost inflation.

At the turn of the century, a coal-fired electrical station that was 8 percent efficient was a state-of-the-art wonder. A solid half-century of progress followed, at a rate of better than a half-percent a year. By the 1960s, such facilities had achieved new-plant

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

efficiencies of over 40 percent. Back then, coal was literally dirt-cheap. But with the coming of the 1974 oil shock, it was assumed that as energy costs soared into the 1980s, market forces would compel heroic efforts to raise the thermodynamic efficiency of such plants to the limits of high technology—a process fuel cost savings would amply justify.

But the cost projections were wrong, and we got the Oil Glut instead. And, courtesy of Earth Day and its aftermath, a draconian regime of sulfur emission control. The enforcement of that regime did two things quite unrelated to acid rain. Installing the control systems reduced the efficiency of existing plants by five whole percentage points, and defunded the development of the next generation of more efficient combustion technology and power-generation systems.

So we are entering the 1990s about 15 percent worse off in terms of CO_2 emission per kilowatt-hour than we were a generation ago. This is pretty close to a worst-case scenario whatever one's view on the near-term effect of greenhouse emissions: the largest single term in America's fuel equation—coal-fired electricity—has been running retrograde to progress in materials science and combustion technology for twenty years. Yet both here and in Japan, science has lately begun to deliver the Right Stuff for raising its efficiency—materials able to withstand higher temperatures and stresses for longer times. But they are being applied more to aircraft engines than to power stations.

Together with the realization that energy costs *do* show a shallow but steady inflationary trend, this suggests that we need not be idle while awaiting newer and more elegant generations of climate models and nuclear technology—or that Holy Grail of applied physics, hot fusion that truly emulates the power of the sun.

So there may indeed be a solution to the profound uncertainty that engenders reluctance when we are offered insurance against CO_2 bracket creep—at a trillion-dollar premium. Consider a double Scots Verdict: even if the verdict on global warming is *not proven*, we could still save a bundle of hard cash if a canny enough energy policy can be found.

Rather than mandating reduced consumption of fuel and its Luddite consequences here and in the growing industrial sector of the Third World, let us consider getting more kilowatt-hours by literally turning up the heat. A policy that promotes raising the minimum thermodynamic efficiency of hotter-running fuel-burning power stations by say 8 percent (to around 44 percent) by the year 2000 might be paid for by the very fuel it saves. Neither we nor our posterity can object to saving ourselves some cash—thrift has as few enemies as prodigality in fuel consumption has friends outside OPEC. And should the presently hung scientific jury reach a Scots Verdict in the interminable trial of *Earth v. The Greenhouse Gases*, little macroeconomic mischief will have been done.

But should nature follow art, and oblige the environmental televangelists with an unambiguously toasty third millennium—when I have spoken of uncertainty in this essay, I have meant what I said—the retrospective imposition of such a policy regime will be a source of some satisfaction to all, save hardened libertarians. But how will stewardship be redefined in the longer term—the century or so it would take to *double* CO_2 at the present pace?

OPTIONS DO exist. Given alternatives to power derived from fossil fuels, the whole fuel cycle can be redefined, with hydrogen replacing carbon. There is another major (and revolutionary) technical fix: we can liquefy air and burn fuels in pure oxygen, and condense the resulting CO_2 with the frigid liquid nitrogen that is the by-product of that liquefaction. But both hydrogen fuels and systems that recapture CO_2 are (like solar and wind power) dauntingly expensive.

So even today, in the midst of climatic ambiguity, even the most chlorophyllic environmentalists are having stirrings of conscience about their adamant refusal to acknowledge an unambiguous fact of physics.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

As surely as CO_2 can absorb the warming infrared, the strong nuclear force is millions of times stronger than the chemical bonds that are burst in unleashing heat from coal. Rather than embarking down the soft energy path that leads back beyond the Industrial Revolution's roots into a future dark age, the Greens should pause to consider the effect on the environment of renewing and perfecting our mastery of the atom's pale fire.

The prospect of nuclear power's second coming presents the environmental millenarians with a real source of cognitive dissonance: it is they who are the problem. It is their delaying tactics that wasted years and squandered billions at Seabrook and elsewhere. And it is their past indifference to the environmental consequences of the fossil fuel that the reactor might have saved that makes a mockery of their present rhetoric. The sooner their paranoia about nuclear waste disposal is laid to rest alongside that waste itself—deep in the arid badlands, well secured, and as soon as the criminal mischief of Chernobyl is buried under the foundations of a reactor both safe and sanely contained, the sooner will civilization cease to be obliged to make a chemical waste repository of the sky.

So let all summon the courage to be kind to our environment. For if the bulk of the arsenals of Armageddon are indeed fading into historical irrelevancy, what better fate for them than to disappear as smokeless fuel into newer and more tractable breeds of nuclear furnaces? Better they light the world for a generation than heat it for a baleful instant.

And better too that cooler heads than those that dominate the hot media should prevail in informing the Congress and the electorate. For this much is certain: the audience needs to see the illumination of this hot-tempered environmental policy debate. If light is to prevail over heat, many scientists will have to simmer down and reflect on what they have lately been doing or consenting to. And perhaps, if candor prevails, these professionals will realize once again that intelligent laymen can recognize cant when they hear it and cartoons when they see them.

Scientists would do well to recall that insight's inevitable corollary—the political neutrality of scientific institutions must first exist if it is to be respected. For as the thaw continues in the Eastern bloc, we see emerging from beneath the glacial recent history of science in the Soviet Union grim evidence of what happened when science was last subordinated to the true believer's agenda for changing the world. Whether the trial of Galileo or the tyranny of Lysenko, at all times and in all polities, science politicized is science betrayed.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Up from Mercantilism

Solving the Latin Debt Mess

Paul Craig Roberts

THE LATIN AMERICAN debt problem, now eight years old, continues to suffer from misdiagnosis. During these eight years the U.S. government has taken one, but only one, slight step toward realism: the earlier pretense that the debt crisis was a liquidity problem that could be solved by more lending has been discarded. With the appearance of the Brady Plan, American officials have at last recognized that the "debt problem," at least in certain cases, is in fact a solvency problem requiring debt reduction.

As welcome as this change is, it is at best a half-step forward. Like its predecessors, the Brady Plan continues to focus on something called "debt management" rather than on changing the model of development that has given rise to the debt crisis in the first place. The inescapable truth is that Latin America's staggering foreign debt is a monument to the failure of development planning. It is the result of development policies, propounded with confidence by Western economists, that substituted public debt and planning for private equity and the market. Far from leading to the development of modern economies, the approach entrenched traditional mercantilism even more deeply, and exacerbated the failures of privilege-ridden economies. It has taken a number of countries to the brink of social breakdown.

There is a solution to the debt problem: the introduction of market economics into Latin America. Only when free economies are established in the region will the debt be repayable and the problem solved. To be sure, this is no easy task, given the long mercantilist history and current economic structure of Latin America, as well as the traditional Western approaches to lending and development. But an understanding of the history of Latin America's debt and an application of some recent positive developments will make it clear that breaking the debt cycle is far from impossible.

The History of Debt

LATIN AMERICA has never possessed an open, capitalist economy. The Spanish conquistadors brought sixteenth-century Spanish feudalism to the New World, and Latin America's current economic woes date back to these days when the system of mercantilism was introduced. Mercantilism is characterized by government regulation of a nation's economy, where the interests of a ruling elite (epitomized by an enormous bureaucracy) are served under the guise of the public interest. Under mercantilism a de facto guild system of production

Paul Craig Roberts holds the William E. Simon Chair in Political Economy at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, D.C., and is Senior Research Fellow at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

arose in Latin America, as only those with the means to manipulate political power could operate businesses. There was little real economic opportunity for the vast majority and no real competition, as the state controlled the major economic avenues.

The oligarchic production relations now prevalent in Latin America evolved not from capitalism, as Marxist thinkers have supposed, but from the exclusionary nature of mercantilism. Mercantilism maximizes what economists call rent-seeking activities, whereby people use government to create protected profits that are not subject to competition. The state is seen as the motor of development, and individuals are regarded as incapable of generating wealth on their own. Private corporations are organized into cartels, resembling the European guilds of the 1600s in that they enjoy monopolistic advantages derived from the state.

Today, almost all of Latin America remains mired in mercantilism. Only Chile, and perhaps Bolivia, have developed the basis for a modern market economy. In his best-selling and increasingly influential book, *The Other Path*, Peruvian economist Hernando De Soto describes some main differences between a mercantilist and a market economy:

> In a market economy, the ability to produce is encouraged because what prevails is competition; in a mercantilist economy, the ability to win privileges and use the law to one's own advantage is encouraged, because the determining factor is state regulation. In a market economy, consumers are served efficiently and economically; in a mercantilist economy, it is the public and private bureaucracies that are well served, generally at the cost of the rest of society.

The high degree of state control required by mercantilism places all manner of economic decisions—ranging from investment to regulation—in bureaucratic hands. Consequently, bribes emerge as the quickest and most efficient method to allocate government resources; and political supporters are routinely rewarded with contracts and jobs.

Some illustrations will provide an idea of the workings and results of the system under which our Latin American neighbors live:

- Morgan Guaranty Trust Company studied ten heavily indebted countries in Latin America between 1983 and 1985, and found that during this time of falling living standards among the poor, the ruling elite managed to deposit $44.2 billion in Western banks.
- In Brazil, misuse of funds is endemic. The government itself estimates that after 10 years of implementing a $1.5 billion rural development program, only 3 percent of the rural poor actually benefitted from it. The layers of bureaucracy and the inbred network of go-betweens in Brazil are so dense and impenetrable that legally appropriated funds do not reach their destination unless the designated recipients pay bribes. Luiz Magnabosco, mayor of Sacramento in Minas Gerais state, told the leading Brazilian newspaper, *O Estado de São Paulo*, in February 1988, that only those who hire consulting firms to "assist" in the process receive their appropriated funds from Seplan, the Central Planning Ministry. Brazil's overall inflation rate in 1989 was 1765 percent, as the government simply printed more money to cover deficits.
- In *The Other Path*, Hernando De Soto describes how, in Lima, Peru, it took 289 days of wading through red tape and $1,231 in bribes—32 times the monthly minimum wage—to set up legally a small garment factory. Peru has more than 270 state companies which consume over half the state's budget. To cover the deficit which this creates, the Peruvian government, as in Brazil, simply prints more money, causing hyperinflation.
- In Argentina, there are almost 2 million bureaucrats in a working population of 11.5 million. Covering the expenditures of such a large state apparatus has brought Argentina into a severe depression, characterized by large budget deficits (estimated at 17 percent of GDP in 1989) and hyperinflation due to the rapid printing of australs. Consumers

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

were faced with price rises of 93,149 percent between 1984 and 1988. Wages could not keep up with inflation and the purchasing power of the average Argentine salary was eroded by about 27 percent over the same period. Argentina's deputy economic minister, Orlando Ferreres, says that Argentines have moved a total of $46 billion in capital to other countries.

- Graham Hancock reports in his book, *Lords of Poverty*, that in Guatemala in the early 1980s, General Romero Lucas's military government pocketed about $350 million of the $1 billion provided by a consortium of lenders led by the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank for the Chixoy Dam project, a giant hydroelectric dam.

As these examples show, the people who benefit from this system are those who know how to manipulate it. This excludes the poor, for whose benefit the development programs were intended. Theft, graft, and corruption are not the whole story; there is also the suppression of private productivity. In a 1987 World Bank study, economist Guy Pfefferman found that in Latin America "governments depress private productivity because in more and more sectors private activity is viewed by the state as competition with its own enterprises, and also because as governments monopolize the 'commanding heights' (e.g., steel, petrochemicals, etc.), private firms are forced to buy their inputs regardless of price and quality."

Pfefferman notes that when rising debt service burdens forced cuts in public spending (such as spending on education and health), public sector employment actually *increased:* "In some of the countries where private employment had been declining, the first priority has been given to protect, indeed, to expand, public sector employment." The study shows that in Mexico, for example, while private sector employment declined an average 0.7 percent yearly from 1980 to 1985, public sector employment grew 7.4 percent over the same period. Peru, Guatemala, and Argentina experienced a similar phenomenon during the same period, as GNP fell.

The (Real) Western Fault

THE WEST shares blame for Latin America's woes, but not for reasons usually cited. Alienated from the market economy that made their own countries prosper, intellectuals in the industrialized countries failed to communicate the ideas conducive to development. A kind of hypocrisy prevailed in which influential economic thinkers in developed nations argued that the strong private business sectors found in their own countries were somehow unsuitable engines for growth in the developing countries. People who themselves relied on the market every day somehow believed it would not work for anyone else. In the development literature, capitalism was redlined.

While few development economists saw a role for capitalism in less developed countries, many found promise in the Soviet model. A typical and influential view was that of Gunnar Myrdal, winner of the Nobel Prize for economics. In his 1956 book, *An International Economy: Problems and Proposals*, Myrdal saw the Soviet model "*as fundamentally a system for the development of underdeveloped countries.* This particular point cannot be stressed too much [emphasis in original]." Myrdal was far from alone. Paul Baran, a Stanford professor, declared in his 1962 book, *The Political Economy of Growth*, that "the dominant fact of our time" is that private property is in "irreconcilable contradiction with the economic and social advancement of the people in underdeveloped countries."

Columbia University professor Ragnar Nurkse, a leading development economist, ignored the economic history of the United States when he declared in 1953 (in his *Problems of Capital Formation in Underdeveloped Countries*) that "private foreign enterprise in the past has not done much to spread industrial development to the backward agricultural countries." He preferred "foreign loans for capital expenditure by public authori-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ties," which "have the advantage that they can be used for domestic economic development in accordance with a coherent overall program." Another prominent development economist, Jan Tinbergen, wrote in *Lessons from the Past* that "it should be recognized and expressly stated that the Soviet Union was the pioneer of central economic planning and has taught the world some of the possibilities in this field."

These views were thoroughly representative of development thinking. As Myrdal attested: "All special advisers to underdeveloped countries who have taken the time and trouble to acquaint themselves with the problems, no matter who they are. . . all recommend central planning as a first condition of progress."

The centralized development planning that resulted from this advice dovetailed nicely with the old mercantilist system, as both in practice functioned to empower an elite group to control the economy in its own interest. The substitution of foreign loans for domestic and foreign equity, in order that the investment process could be controlled by the government's development plan, gave mercantilist governments the basis from which to extend their control of economic activity. Explosive growth of the bureaucracy resulted, as thousands of international bureaucrats ensconced in Western development institutions churned out investment targets for compilation into plans, giving rise to the employment of millions of Latin American bureaucrats in the planning ministries and the state companies. The undertaking turned out to be fantastically expensive, both in terms of public sector expenditures and in terms of opportunities foregone by private citizens who were crowded out of the economy by development planning. Educated people who could have provided the leadership to transform the mercantilist system were instead co-opted and comfortably ensconced within the ruling bureaucracies.

In these circumstances, it is not surprising that bureaucrats in Latin America have become a new aristocracy—in the cases of the most powerful ones—complete with palatial estates and Swiss bank accounts. Planning, with its emphasis on comprehensive state control of development, has provided opportunities for a feeding frenzy unparalleled in history, as funds are squandered, stolen, and spirited away into foreign bank accounts.

The McNamara Effect

THE MULTILATERAL development institutions, especially the World Bank, along with bilateral aid agencies such as the U.S. Agency for International Development, played a major role in foisting "development planning" upon Latin America. Loans financed by these institutions were used to help build up the state enterprises, giving them effective monopoly rights over the development of resources in diverse sectors of the economy—all in accordance with the "plan."

Commercial bank lending flowed to governments that followed the development approach espoused by multilateral lending institutions. Indeed, commercial banks frequently made loans to supplement multilateral development bank lending for projects. In 1978, in a speech before the World Bank Board of Governors, World Bank president Robert S. McNamara stressed that the prestigious multilateral institutions should "support the expansion of commercial flows by providing private lenders greater assurance of the quality of economic management in the borrowing countries." This proved to be a false assurance, but it served to direct even private financial flows into the hands of the state.

In the 1970s, again during his tenure as president of the World Bank, McNamara argued that less developed countries were not developing adequately because development finance was directed toward profit-oriented projects, while funding for a wide range of social needs that would yield economic benefits only in the long term—such as improved health care and education—was scarce. Such thinking, combined with the flood of petro-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

dollars on the scene, contributed to a breakdown in commercial lending standards. That breakdown not only caused loan officers to overestimate the prospects of repayment, but more generally, it helped to sever the connection between investment and profitability. Commercial banks believed that sovereign guarantees would ensure debt repayment. Under such a system, a Latin America debt crisis at some point was virtually guaranteed.

The International Monetary Fund responded to the debt crisis by directing more of its resources to Latin American countries. The Fund widened its standard adjustment process for balance of payments problems to include the debtors. "Structural adjustment" loans, a mainstay throughout the 1980s, have been made contingent upon governments' compliance with specific conditions spelled out in IMF-approved adjustment plans. By focusing on budgeting, inflation, and exchange rate policies, instead of privatization, the adjustment plans generally have caused the private sector (through higher taxes or price controls) to bear the burden of adjustment. Countries without a strong government commitment to privatization on their own—presently the majority of the Latin debtors—have maintained state-centered economies essentially intact.

The Baker Plan, announced in October 1985, was a policy of lending money to pay interest, or piling debt upon debt—a temporary face-saving measure that worsened the problem. In March 1989, the Brady Plan was introduced. Another superficial approach, it differed from the Baker Plan in that now banks were simultaneously called upon to write down their Latin debt and issue new loans to the same uncreditworthy borrowers! Brady recommended that the commercial bank loans be guaranteed by Western governments via the World Bank and the IMF. In late 1989, banks were cajoled to join in a Mexico loan package, which analysts expect will total $1 billion over the next three years. Currently, Congress is poised to raise the capital of the multilateral institutions, despite their growing arrearage and the warning provided by the bailout of the savings and loan institutions, which could cost U.S. taxpayers upwards of $200 billion.

The Bush administration seems intent on making private commercial banks underwrite public policy. With the Brady Plan, the creditor banks' obligation to shareholders and depositors is once again bypassed, this time in the push to force them simultaneously to write down existing loans and to make new ones. The irony of coercing commercial banks to eliminate their bottom line, while record numbers of savings and loan associations fold due to bad loans, is lost on the U.S. government. Yet, now more than ever, the health of the international financial system depends upon bankers going back to being merely businessmen.

The Brady Plan, like its predecessors, will fail because it does not compel debtor governments to privatize. If anything, the approach encouraged debtors to put off major reforms in the belief that debt relief would be forthcoming. By endowing governments with pervasive control over their economies, we set up conditions exactly opposite to those required for sound economic growth. Latin American debt is unpayable because Latin American economies are unsuccessful, and yet we continue to focus on debt management rather than on the underlying economic failure. As lending continues and the debt grows daily, it is time for a new approach.

The Private Sector Plan

IN PLACE OF disastrous policies like those reviewed, I propose something I will call a Private Sector Plan (or an anti-planning plan, if you will). This focuses on eliminating the root cause of the debt crisis by replacing state-controlled development with the economic and political institutions of a market economy. The existing system, legacy of both Spanish rule and development planning, would be swept away. Economies would be based instead on the private sector—thereby positioning Latin America for

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

growth on the scale of a Hong Kong or Korea.

This plan requires overturning the legal basis for development planning and mercantilism. As Hernando De Soto puts it in *The Other Path*,

> What determines a society's economic system is the way its legal institutions operate. If business activity is restricted to a select group, the economic system will be a mercantilist one. . . . But if every citizen, regardless of his or her origin, color, sex, occupation, or political orientation, can in practice be in business, then we shall have a genuinely democratic economy, a market economy.

To establish the basis for a market economy, several specific policies will have to be adopted. These include:

1. Establishing a legal foundation for impartial contract law.
2. Simplifying procedures for establishing a legal business, ensuring free entry and exit of all firms, and placing the establishment of a business within reach of the entire population. This would bring booming informal market businesses into the official system, providing hitherto unreachable tax revenues to the government.
3. Opening the country to private investment, both domestic and foreign.
4. Opening the economy to international competition by establishing a market exchange rate and eliminating import-export regulations and subsidies.
5. Abolishing all existing taxes and instituting in their place a low, flat rate tax, preferably a consumption-based income tax that excludes savings from the tax base. This measure would eliminate the corruption that has grown around Latin America's presently unworkable tax codes, and would result in the governments receiving far more revenues than they currently do. Bolivia seems to have solved its problem with a 10 percent income tax rate combined with a 10 percent value-added tax (VAT) that is deductible against the income tax. This way people who pay VAT and keep receipts avoid income tax, while those who cheat on the VAT pay more income tax.
6. Prohibiting central banks from printing money to cover the public sector deficit.
7. Reforming election rules so that state and local officials are accountable to the electorate, instead of to the party to which they belong. This would foster an increase in essential services (such as paved roads) provided to populations outside the capitals. The existing system of political centralization funnels resources to the center where local needs are not priorities. Political decentralization would enhance competition and accountability and direct resources to local needs.
8. Relying on private sector debt reduction programs, such as debt-equity swaps and debt buybacks.
9. Privatizing state companies. Privatization will remove the drain of inefficient public sector companies on public finance, cutting the deficit and helping to lower inflation.

Some would fear short-term dislocations from the Private Sector Plan as subsidies are withdrawn and inefficient operations are closed. Many who stress these dislocations simultaneously support IMF austerity programs which have far more severe effects. The IMF approach closes down the economy, while privatization opens it up. Privatization also provides revenues to the government in place of government subsidies to inefficient state enterprises. The labor market changes from one dependent on subsidies to one dependent on profitability, thus broadening the tax base and curtailing the need to print money to cover deficits.

If adopted, a Private Sector Plan like this would completely overhaul economic, social, and political life in Latin America. As for its implementation, I see that as a three-step process. First, we would have to persuade ourselves of its merits; then the IMF and the World Bank; and finally and most importantly the Latin Americans themselves. This tripartite task might seem a big challenge, but

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

experience is the best persuasion, and experience has proved that planning is not the model for development.

Convincing ourselves should be easy. For one thing—and as socialists themselves now recognize around the world—the very success of our economic system speaks for itself. For another, insofar as it existed, the American belief in the efficacy of big government has been shaken profoundly. The failure of government policies in the 1970s, the success of Ronald Reagan's policies in the 1980s, and the collapse of communism have all contributed to a revolution in our own understanding of what governments can—and cannot—do. The *a priori* belief in government solutions that characterized policy thinking in the 1950s and 1960s is notably absent today.

PERSUADING the IMF and the World Bank will be more difficult. Their bureaucracies, whose terms of employment are rather handsome, have a vested interest in the perpetuation of the status quo. Adjustment loans, conditionality, and development assistance have, over the decades, generated procedural and institutional knowledge that will no longer be valuable if and when the private sector is allowed to take over the development process.

These interests notwithstanding, both the World Bank and the IMF—and especially their financial officers—know that they are holding loan portfolios even shakier than those of the money center banks. Chase Manhattan and Citibank, for example, at least have other loans besides Third World paper. The multinational banks have already been forced to "round-trip" funds by lending to pay interest in order to avoid building arrears on their books that would jeopardize their own bond ratings. Their clamor for increased capitalization is driven in part by their need to lend more to prevent defaults. It is no longer a process that generates entirely new funding for Third World debtors, and not even bureaucrats are hard-hearted enough to drive poor debtors even deeper in debt for the sake of keeping their own loan portfolios current.

The third step—convincing Latin America of the importance of the private sector—may seem to be the most daunting task of all, given the fact that millions of Latin American bureaucrats owe their privileged existence to the present system. But as in Eastern Europe, the revolution can bypass the bureaucrats. New thinking is already underway; a region once embalmed in mercantilist orthodoxy (frequently with a socialist overlay) now sports free market centers of growing influence. In Peru, Hernando De Soto's Institute for Liberty and Democracy has influenced the thinking of Mario Vargas Llosa, a leading presidential candidate in the 1990 elections. In Argentina, Alvaro Alsogaray's Institute of the Social Market Economy has been tapped by President Carlos Menem and has provided a plan for the privatization and deregulation of the economy. Alsogaray himself serves as a senior economic adviser. Little may come of the effort, but to have a Peronist president asking for privatization plans is itself a major breakthrough. Even socialist politicians—like Senator Mario Covas in Brazil—have made calls for privatization.

In Guatemala, Manuel Ayau's Francisco Marroquin Foundation is dedicated to spreading free market ideas and democracy throughout Latin America. Ayau is a candidate in the October 1990 Guatemalan presidential elections. The Dominican Republic has the Economy and Development Foundation, which publishes free-market oriented studies and hosts television shows. In Chile, the Public Studies Center is led by Harald Beyer.

In Mexico, the Center for Free Enterprise Research was founded in 1983 by Luis Pazos, who is well known for publishing numerous books on the free market, including university textbooks and free market literature in comic book form for popular consumption. His book, *The Government and Inflation,* is in its eighth printing. Mexico even has a Ludwig von Mises Cultural Institute, which bestows an annual Legion of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Liberty Award, conducts numerous radio and TV programs, and sponsors seminars and conferences. In 1987, the institute opened affiliates in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, and El Salvador.

THIS IS ONLY a partial list of the new centers of thought, but it is enough to suggest that convincing Latin Americans themselves of the virtues of capitalism is probably the least of our problems. Socialist ideas are intellectually exhausted and discredited by practical results. Under those conditions, a few free market institutes can become immeasurably influential. In Britain, it was the Institute for Economic Affairs that single-handedly brought about the Thatcher Revolution. In the United States, a small handful of people began what became the Reagan Revolution. In Latin America, millions of people still mouth socialist slogans, but without conviction or intellectual vitality. Today the only question is how long vested interests can remain entrenched in the face of economic failure.

The new Brazilian president, Fernando Collor, triumphed on a platform attacking the bureaucratic "maharajahs" and state corruption. He says he intends to sell or otherwise divest more than one hundred unproductive, bloated, and deficit-ridden government enterprises. The entrenched system may prove stronger than the new president or he may fail because of his policies of price controls and confiscation of private savings, but the point is that he did not campaign for more socialism and state regulation. The long-ruling elite in Mexico is in the process of reforming its own destructive handiwork. It has begun punishing corruption instead of treating it as a right of political office, and it is dismantling the institutionalized protection of government monopolies and private businesses.

The existence of large informal economies shows that Latin America has entrepreneurial talent. If Latin America's private sector were set free to produce, the region might very well experience the benefits of dramatic growth rates in a short time. The Private Sector Plan would provide the revenues to enable the countries to pay their restructured debts. Countries such as South Korea and Chile that have market economies have already progressed beyond their debt problems. Moreover, the Private Sector Plan would take governments out of the commercial arena and free the public sector to focus on such now-neglected essentials as police protection, education, and national infrastructure.

In the late twentieth century, government intervention is in growing disrepute. The spectacle of the Soviet leadership hat-in-hand trying to obtain Western credits and technology to hold together a crumbling empire makes a mockery of the high hopes expressed by the development planners in the 1950s. Gunnar Myrdal's jubilant declaration that "in the underdeveloped countries outside the Soviet orbit, national economic planning is almost everywhere a universally acclaimed ideal" rings hollow today. Henceforth, the process of development must be based on the virtues of private property, individual incentive, and free markets. As long as bankers, politicians, and development planners continue to ignore the root cause, Latin America's debt will continue to grow. It is time for a real solution.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

STARTing Over

Adam Garfinkle

EVER SINCE THE Soviet concession on SDI at Jackson Hole, Wyoming in mid-September 1989, expectations for a reasonably quick completion of a START Treaty have run very high. Judging from the pace of negotiations so far in 1990, these expectations are justified. In all likelihood, sometime this year the Bush administration will set a completed treaty before the Senate for ratification.

This rapid progress has struck most people as a wonderfully good thing and it is not hard to see why. START would be the first strategic nuclear arms agreement to reduce nuclear weapons, an achievement ardently promised but left unrequited in both SALT I and SALT II Treaties. START would also be seen as adding critical momentum to the improving state of relations between the superpowers—an appearance of no small political importance to both Gorbachev and Bush.

But a closer look raises other possibilities. Even if completing an agreement turns out to be relatively easy, securing ratification may not be. Intoxicating as the present U.S.-Soviet mood may be, it cannot divert scrutiny from anything as critical as a major agreement on strategic weapons. The START ratification process will not resemble the casual cakewalk over the INF Treaty in early 1988. To the contrary, the administration is headed into a political hornet's nest of debate about strategic doctrine and programs. Indeed, despite vast changes in the last decade, START's ratification may resemble nothing so much as the SALT II ratification process of 1979.

Adam Garfinkle is coordinator of the Political Studies Program at the Foreign Policy Research Institute and contributing editor of the institute's journal, *ORBIS*.

Here We Go Again?

IT IS NOW standard political wisdom that SALT II was sacrificed on the altar of Washington politics. Attacks from both the Left and Right on the treaty, and related disputes over other issues such as the size and composition of the defense budget, were too much for a weak Carter administration to parry. The result was a debacle. The Senate refused to ratify SALT II, and to avoid political embarrassment during the year before a presidential election, President Carter removed the treaty from consideration, using the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan as a pretext.

But politics alone did not kill SALT II. The main reason that SALT II was not ratified is that between the time negotiations began in earnest in 1974 and the time they concluded in 1979, a sea change had occurred in U.S. strategic doctrinal thinking and in U.S. views of the concordance (or lack thereof) between U.S. and Soviet conceptions of arms control and strategic liability. Had SALT II been

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ready for the Senate in 1975, or even 1977, it would have passed easily. But by 1979, new technological developments pertaining mainly to counterforce ballistic accuracies and new intelligence about how the Soviet Union was deploying that technology convinced a majority of observers that key U.S. assumptions about the very nature of strategic stability were no longer valid.

Specifically, Soviet deployments beyond numerical parity that had been thought to compensate for general American technological superiority were now seen instead as components of a war-winning first strike counterforce doctrine. If that were so, then post-SALT I expectations—that after the achievement of rough parity, the arms race would find a natural equipoise—were unwarranted. Also put in doubt was the assumption that Soviet accession to the ABM Treaty reflected a strategic viewpoint consanguine with that of the United States. Instead, the belief gained ground that Soviet interest in the ABM Treaty had more to do with limiting U.S. technological momentum and with guaranteeing a free ride for new Soviet counterforce systems.

This huge conceptual shift doomed SALT II. The Carter administration, whose own views on these issues were diverse, could not argue for the treaty with one voice. Officials were thus caught between the floors, so to speak, as the doctrinal debate evolved, and the deal went down.

Much has changed over the last ten years, but some things have not. In 1979, U.S. foreign and security policies were in deep malaise, while an aggressive Soviet geopolitical offensive and arms build-up proceeded unabated. In 1990, Western fortunes are waxing and it is the Soviet empire that finds itself in deep trouble. This shift gives rise to at least two ironies about the politics of arms control.

First, while improved U.S.-Soviet relations have opened up a host of opportunities for arms control, the reasons for pursuing them are both different and diminished. The new U.S.-Soviet detente, built as it is on Soviet weaknesses, has made arms control politically less important in the United States. In the popular mind, the Soviets are less a threat than a defeated basket case deserving of U.S. political advice and economic charity. The popular impulse, therefore, is to ask: Why split hairs counting warheads when peace is breaking out all over? So while agreements may be easier to get, we have less need of them politically than we have had for some decades.

Second, the conceptual divide about deterrence, strategic doctrine, and arms control that shaped the SALT II debate will return, but in a new form. Adherents of minimal deterrence who believe that only a few weapons are needed to deter one's opponents can now seize upon the calm of the early 1990s to argue that even if Soviet strategic doctrine once called for aggressive preemptive counterforce strikes, it does so no longer. Instead of "the empire isn't evil," we now hear "the empire isn't *still* evil." Such advocates will insist that Soviet doctrine is now reformulated as a "defensive strategy" in fact as well as in theory; that continuing Soviet counterforce deployments would cease if only ours did; and that the strategic balance itself has become virtually irrelevant.

One might have thought that we would have learned our strategic lessons by now, and that these old arguments would have been settled at last by experience and common sense. But some things never change. Democracies have short memories and American democracy, in particular, when allowed by normal times to be itself, has an almost unlimited appetite for circumscribing its military forces and commitments. The irony is that in seemingly calmer times, vigilance is undermined and exactly the kinds of "soft" positions that got us into trouble in the first place can return. And so, the doves are back, arguing for a general demobilization of deterrent U.S. military power. Such thinking followed virtually every other war the United States has fought; why should the end of the Cold War be different?

This is not to suggest that the Soviet

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Union itself remains unchanged. When the Soviets say that they *no longer* think a nuclear war can be won, they probably mean it. But the Soviet military has not abandoned counterforce for purposes of damage limitation. Damage limitation does not require the mix and size of forces that a war-winning strategy requires, and that is good. But the strategic balance has not become irrelevant; a nuclear war has not become impossible; nuclear weapons still cast political shadows; and deterrence has not somehow become self-regulating.

Prelude to Cacophony

ONE WAY OF thinking about the coming debate is to examine the travails of a certain infamous phrase: "the window of vulnerability." The phrase works like a catalyst: dropped into any argument about strategic affairs and arms control, it soon separates any intellectual mixture into its basic axiomatic assumptions. The notion also serves as a kind of transparent palimpsest; through it one can trace the evolution and debasing of a variety of arguments and the partisan designs of their advocates.

Since at least the mid–1970s, Americans concerned with arms control have been divided about basic premises concerning strategic nuclear deterrence. At the heart of this disagreement lies the disputed significance of the ballistic counterforce imbalance, depending in turn on disputes about Soviet strategic doctrine and policy. The imbalance is what gave rise to the "window of vulnerability" thesis itself. Even to refer to it is to conjure the strategic divide that separates one school of American strategic thinkers from another.

In plain English, the difference comes down to whether it is more effective to deter war by credibly threatening to destroy Soviet cities and people no matter what they do or when they do it; or whether it is more effective to confront the Soviets with the prospect that their relative military situation would be far worse after a nuclear exchange than before it. The former approach only requires that the United States have enough fairly accurate, but survivable, weapons systems capable of targeting enough Soviet cities to inflict "unacceptable damage," however that may be defined. The latter one requires a substantially larger number of survivable systems capable of accurate attacks against a range of Soviet military assets.

These doctrinal questions remain unsettled, and politics will again shape the arms control debate. For those who adhere to the more minimal view of deterrence, SALT II was defensible from a military perspective. For those who believe deterrence rests on more exacting strategic capabilities, SALT II was either a bad deal or a meaningless one. This dispute still matters. Those who liked SALT II will like START even if it leaves the relative Soviet advantage in prompt hard-target ballistic systems unchanged, or even if it enhances it. Those who opposed SALT II, other things being more or less equal, will also oppose START if it does not redress the counterforce imbalance.

As before, doctrinal disagreement will mix with peripheral but emotional arguments about the size of the defense budget and the level and types of strategic modernization to be sought. Clearly, if the administration cannot find a way to pull enough liberal Democrats behind its preferred modernization program and is forced to settle for less, it will lose conservatives when it comes time to count votes for START. And the collapse of communism notwithstanding, it still only takes a third of the Senate plus one to spoil the party.

Your "Window" or Mine?

IN ORDER to argue that the strategic balance is essentially irrelevant, many Democrats will insist that the counterforce imbalance is a bogeyman from bygone days. What vocabulary will they choose? They will claim that the "window of vulnerability" has been closed, and that President Bush's own adviser on national security, General Brent Scowcroft, was himself the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

one who closed it in April 1983 with the Scowcroft Commission report.

The assertion that the Scowcroft Commission closed the "window of vulnerability" in 1983 is one we are bound to hear repeatedly as soon as the treaty is completed and the White House begins to circle the wagons for the ratification debate. Indeed, this notion has become an indelible part of the Common Knowledge, but, like many other aspects of the Common Knowledge, it is quite wrong.

What treaty opponents said in 1979 was that SALT II would countenance the theoretical vulnerability of the *land-based* leg of the U.S. strategic triad. In its original formulation, the "window of vulnerability" never meant that the vulnerability of U.S. land-based missiles was tantamount to the literal vulnerability of the entire U.S. strategic force. But because the land-based force was the only leg of the triad capable of a counterforce response to a Soviet first-strike, its vulnerability was deemed crisis-unstable (such is the jargon), unhealthy for the credibility of extended deterrence, and therefore worth worrying about.

The original "window of vulnerability" idea was thus part of a serious debate about the dynamics of the then-new mutual counterforce strategic world. What were the implications of counterforce inequality—even amid overall rough numerical parity—on crisis dynamics? Would a superpower with a counterforce advantage be inclined toward great risk-taking at lower levels of violence? SALT II opponents had no monopoly of wisdom on these questions, and doubtless some of the fears they expressed ten years ago were exaggerated. Nevertheless, the problems encapsulated by the phrase "window of vulnerability" were real and so difficult that we are discussing them still.

Clearly, the "window of vulnerability" was shorthand for one approach to the bedeviling issues of stability in a counterforce imbalanced world, *not* a simple-minded notion that the Soviet Union would initiate a nuclear war "out of the blue" just because Minuteman was theoretically vulnerable. Opponents of SALT II never claimed that nuclear war was at hand because of the proposed treaty or for any other reason; such fearsome tactics instead became a staple of the Left and the nuclear freeze movement. SALT II was not undone, as some latter day pundits would have it, by a band of hysterical Cold Warriors whose views had not changed since the days of the 1948 Berlin crisis. On the contrary, it was the views of proponents of finite deterrence that were stuck in the rut, ignoring the implications of the on-going revolution in strategic technology.

The core argument over SALT II, revolving around the "window of vulnerability," was a serious one, but a funny thing did happen to the "window" on the way to the Reagan administration. President Reagan, as is well known, lacked a solid grasp of such esoteric matters; his strengths lay in other domains. One of them was political savvy, so when he came upon the evocative notion of a "window of vulnerability" through his advisers in the 1980 campaign, he took it with him into the presidential election season. As often happens with complex ideas spun out into a partisan environment, nuance gave way to the requisites of polemics. The "window of vulnerability" exited the campaign a simple-minded caricature. Suddenly, the vulnerability of Minuteman was tantamount to decisive Soviet military superiority as construed in the flattest and most primitive sense of the phrase.

Once this had happened, the "window of vulnerability" became easy prey for those who wanted to discount the very real problem it had originally described and who wanted to frustrate the Reagan administration's plans for modernizing U.S. land-based strategic forces. This explains how much of the erroneous Common Knowledge on this matter came about. It also helps to explain the strange notions about what the Scowcroft Commission did and did not do to the famed "window." As a result, the partisan battle over the "window of vulnerability" as a piece of strategic vocabulary was waged continuously between 1980 and April 1983, and when the Scowcroft Commission report was issued, it set off a stampede into print by

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

those committed observers who were determined to make the report mean what they wanted it to mean. In the process, the truth was trampled still further.

The Scowcroft Commission report affirmed the vulnerability of the land-based leg of the strategic triad, and it did say early on that the vulnerability of U.S. land-based forces was not the same as the vulnerability of the entire U.S. strategic triad. But, as noted earlier, this was hardly news, for SALT II's opponents had never made such claims. Nevertheless, a lot of people, seeing what they wanted to see, threw down the report and picked up their pens. To give one of many examples of what happened next, the senior editors of the *New Republic* wrote in May 1983 that the report

> . . . should be satisfying to certain critics of the Administration's strategic thinking as it should be embarrassing to the Administration. Some of the Administration's most fundamental strategic axioms—which the president has put to good political use, in the form of such slogans as "the window of vulnerability"—do not survive the Scowcroft Commission's scrutiny. . . . The vulnerability of America's land-based forces, in other words, is not the vulnerability of America. Or, to put it differently, we, without a first-strike force, are deterring them, and they, with a first-strike force, are deterred.

The scribblers did not read far enough. The Scowcroft Commission *supported* the fundamental strategic axioms of the Reagan administration; it affirmed rather eloquently the "window of vulnerability" argument as it existed in pre-Reagan 1979. If the window were really closed, why would the commission have insisted that the United Stated develop a mobile missile? Even though it is more than seven years old, it is worth quoting the report at some length because so many people seem never actually to have read it:

> Effective deterrence of any Soviet temptation to threaten or launch a massive conventional or a limited nuclear war. . . requires us to have a comparable ability to destroy Soviet military targets. . . . A one-sided strategic condition in which the Soviet Union could effectively destroy the whole range of strategic targets in the United States, but we could not effectively destroy a similar range of targets in the Soviet Union, would be extremely unstable over the long run. Such a situation could tempt the Soviets, in a crisis, to feel they could successfully threaten or even undertake conventional or limited nuclear aggression in the hope that the United States would lack a fully effective response. A one-sided condition of this sort would clearly not serve the cause of peace.

In the report's conclusions, the critical issue of extended deterrence was addressed:

> The serious imbalance between the Soviet's massive ability to destroy hardened land-based military targets with their ballistic missile force and our lack of such a capability must be redressed promptly. Our ability to assure our allies that we have the capability and will to stand with them, with whatever forces are necessary. . . is in question as long as this imbalance exists. . . . [W]e must have a credible capacity for controlled, prompt, limited attack on hard targets ourselves. . . . Consequently, in the interest of the alliance as a whole, we cannot safely permit a situation to continue wherein the Soviets have the capability promptly to destroy a range of hardened military targets and we do not.

Now, that is exactly what Paul Nitze and Eugene Rostow and Alexander Haig and Senators Henry Jackson and John Tower meant by a "window of vulnerability" during the SALT II hearings, as even a cursory review of their testimonies and statements from 1978 to 1979 makes plain. The Scowcroft Commission never closed the "window of vulnerability"—it only closed the ill-constructed shutters affixed by the Great Communicator, who was, in this instance at least, a "window of vulnerability" in his own right.

Closing the Window of Vulnerability

THE ORIGINAL "window of vulnerability" is still open, at least judging by the usual numbers and ratios. For all the Reagan administration's huffing and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

puffing, the ratio of Soviet to U.S. counterforce warheads actually *grew* over the eight years of Reagan's tenure. While the United States has fumbled around for more than ten years trying to bring to full operational capacity a new ICBM, arguing inconclusively between deploying a mobile MIRVed MX or a single-warheaded Midgetman, the Soviet Union—poverty, glasnost, perestroika, wild-eyed Lithuanians, and all—has designed, developed, and deployed *both* the SS–25 and SS–24. In addition, it has deployed what Moscow calls a modified version of the monstrous SS–18, but which is in fact qualitatively improved to the point that it is in essence a third new Soviet ICBM.

These three additions contribute considerably to the already daunting Soviet strategic advantage. Even with the 50 percent reduction in heavy ICBMs required by START, the Soviets will be able to maintain, indeed improve in relative terms, their prompt hard-target capabilities. Increased mobility, combined with improvements in missile guidance, will result in a more accurate, survivable, and dangerous Soviet strategic force. This effort is not born of absent-mindedness. On the contrary, now that the Soviet security perimeter in Eastern Europe has collapsed, and given the enormous expense of conventional forces, nuclear weapons are more important to the Soviet sense of security and superpower status than ever before. Soviet doctrinal adjustments notwithstanding, this continuing build-up simply must not go without an answer, and START, no matter how benign it might (or might not) be in other ways, cannot substitute for one.

Reducing warheads by half, even down to numerically equal levels, would not thereby create equal capabilities and equal risks that are conducive to deterrence. The mix of weapons would remain significantly different between the two powers, yielding different operational capabilities favoring the Soviet Union. There would also be two other related and important asymmetries. One is that if war begins, the Soviets will start it; the other is that, overall, the number of targets inside the Soviet Union is larger and better defended that ours. If available U.S. retaliatory warheads diminish dramatically relative to the Soviet target set—which includes some 3,000 buried and hardened command posts—we will find ourselves unable to do what our strategic integrated operating plan (SIOP) would have us do. We must then confront two questions: Does a reduced likelihood of war, thanks to the presumed political benefits of START, compensate for a reduced ability to prosecute war should deterrence fail? And does a diminution in relative capabilities drive us for better or worse to a redefinition of our strategic doctrine? These are crucial questions, and no ratification debate will be able—or should be allowed—to avoid them.

Arms control cannot substitute for military competition; it is rather *a part* of military competition. If the Bush administration tries to ignore these questions, those who led the attack on SALT II will lead an attack on START. The administration must find a way to modernize and reconfigure U.S. strategic forces effectively within a START-constrained context, or it will be undercut from the Right, perhaps decisively so.

If the administration does tend to business, however, it will face even stronger attacks from the Left. These will be easier to manage, but to do so, General Scowcroft and his associates will need to invest in a couple of cases of Windex to restore the "window of vulnerability" to its pristine condition circa April 1983.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

One of Ours

Mark Falcoff

IN 1979, nearing eighty years of age and having suffered a stroke—from which he made only a tentative recovery—the French philosopher and sociologist Raymond Aron faced the possibility of three different literary projects. One was a book on Marx, one a treatise on the philosophy of history, and one his memoirs. Characteristically, he made his choice by writing the first chapter of each. When the task was completed, he realized that "unless I was going to make an extraordinary effort on myself, or rather, against myself, I ought to choose the third." The result is *Memoirs: Fifty Years of Political Reflection*,* an extraordinary book which takes the reader through every inch of the disputed philosophical terrain of French politics and culture from the 1930s through the 1970s.

The importance of Aron's personal testimony can hardly be overstated: from the 1950s on, he was the most representative liberal intellectual in a society in which liberalism—understood in the European sense—was under almost daily siege. In *The Opium of the Intellectuals* he attacked the Marxist idea, frontally, at the apogee of its prestige and influence in France. As the student revolutionaries of 1968 put it with a remarkable economy of words, "Aron is not one of ours." We are so far from that period today—in both France and the United States—that at times the reader must make an effort of historical imagination to grasp why certain commonsense notions were regarded as so controversial at the time. Fortunately, Aron provides us with an extensive narrative, rich in period background and detail.

In fact, reading these *Memoirs* evokes nothing so much as a series of evenings with an eminent old friend who has finally decided to take one into his confidence. (The impression is intensified by George Holoch's English translation, lucid and correct, yet almost literal when necessary in order to convey the conversational tone of the French original.) The sheer intellectual force of his argument—this, at a time of sharply diminished physical powers—gives some sense of the man's enormous stature at his zenith, and makes one regret all the more that this was his last book.

Raymond Aron was born in 1902 of a prosperous Jewish family which had settled in France during the eighteenth century. His father was a businessman who suffered from a sense of thwarted academic ambition. It was perhaps inevitable, then, that the oldest of his three sons would receive a first-rate secondary education (Raymond's classmates included not only Jean-Paul Sartre but sev-

Mark Falcoff is resident scholar in foreign policy at the American Enterprise Institute in Washington, D.C.

*George Holoch, trans. New York: Holmes and Meier, 1990. 509 pp., $45.00.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

eral others destined to make major intellectual and academic reputations, including Paul Nizan, Georges Canguilhem, and Daniel Lagache) and then go on to become a secondary-school *professeur*. Far less predictable was the eventual course of Raymond's career, which took him to places and to heights neither he nor his father could have anticipated.

After taking a philosophy degree at the Sorbonne ("No doubt, the thesis deserved to be relegated to the ferocious criticism of the mice"), and a year of military service, Aron broke stride with his contemporaries by going to study in Germany. He was there from 1930 to 1932, witnessing the final agony of the Weimar Republic and Hitler's rise to power—events whose immediate relevance to him, as both a Frenchman and a Jew, he had no trouble recognizing. (It was there, also, that he met another French student, Suzanne Gauchon, who became his wife.)

FROM 1933 to 1939 he was back in France, absorbed in teaching (first in a lycèe in Le Havre, where Sartre had preceded him by a year, then in Paris) and writing his first books. It was during these years, too, that he slowly began to discard vague sympathies for socialism in favor of a skeptical, questioning conservatism. As he explains in these memoirs, Hitler's rise to power was decisive for this change in outlook: "I moved slowly from revolt against the past to apprehension of the future. . . . At bottom the same values inspired me, but beyond the left and anti-fascism, it was now a question of France and salvation." That is, Aron saw no logic to undermining France's sense of national unity at a time when its very existence was threatened by Nazi Germany. Nor could he understand why his colleagues in the Latin quarter expended their "antifascist" energies on a threat which hardly existed in France at all, while at the same time opposing the only concrete measures—that is, rearmament—capable of confronting one which did.

In 1939 Aron was called to the colors as a reserve officer of a meteorological unit and sent to the Belgian border. Demobilized by the armistice a few months later, and sensing the direction in which the new collaborationist regime at Vichy was moving, he left his wife in Toulouse and took ship to England, where he joined Colonel Charles de Gaulle. This decision, forced upon him by circumstances, had important consequences for his career. For one thing, it gave him a footing in the English language equal to the one he already possessed in German (and this, at a time when few Frenchmen knew, or wished to know, either). From then until his return to France in 1944, he worked at Free French headquarters in Carlton Gardens, largely writing and editing de Gaulle's liberationist organ, *La France libre*.

Aron was among the first dozen or so intellectuals to rally to de Gaulle, a fact that subsequently gave him fairly intimate access to the leader of the Free French. At the time, many Frenchmen (including many who were opposed to Vichy) regarded the Colonel as something of a Bonapartist or worse, but Aron never doubted de Gaulle's basic decency. Nonetheless, he was not (and never became) a Gaullist *de stricte observance*, as he would have put it. For one thing, Aron resisted all pressures to turn his journal into a frank organ of propaganda, which he believed would undermine its credibility. For another, he had a view of the Vichy regime that was very different from that of his chief. "I knew that only the defeat had allowed [Marshal Pétain and his associates] to come to power," he recalls, "but I also knew that some of their ideas predated the defeat and would survive victory." Whereas de Gaulle believed that "France" was a spiritual concept which he embodied wherever he happened to be, Aron accepted from the very beginning the fundamental historicity (even, in a certain way, the legitimacy) of the collaborationist regime. For him, de Gaulle and Pétain represented, after all, two sides of an ancient family quarrel—an issue complicated, but not subsumed, by German military occupation. The primary objective after Liberation, he felt, should not be settling scores but avoiding civil war;

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

this view put Aron at odds not with only de Gaulle during his brief postwar presidency (1945–46) but also with the leaders of the triumphant Resistance.

After his return to France in 1944, Aron turned down a university chair at Bordeaux to enter journalism, first at the Resistance paper *Combat* (where Albert Camus was a colleague), and then in 1947, as a columnist for the great conservative daily *Figaro*, where he remained for thirty years. During the late 1940s and early 1950s he was also a member of the national council of de Gaulle's *Rassemblement du peuple français*—a rather paradoxical situation considering the number and importance of the issues upon which he disagreed with his supreme leader, including German rearmament (indeed, the very creation of a postwar West German state), the Schuman Plan, Indochina, Algeria, and European defense policies generally.[1] In 1955 he returned to the Sorbonne as a professor, where he wrote a number of crucial works of sociology and political science, including *The Century of Total War; The Opium of the Intellectuals; Peace and War Among Nations; Eighteen Lectures on Industrial Society; Democracy and Totalitarianism; On War: Atomic Weapons and Global Diplomacy;* and *France: Steadfast and Changing.*[2]

Through his books and articles he was well known in the United States, Great Britain, and Germany—probably, indeed, for most of his career more highly regarded in each than in France itself. Nonetheless, towards the end of his life he was often summoned to represent "liberal" (that is, conservative) positions in French television debates, including one occasion in 1976 in which he was selected to respond to Socialist François Mitterand. Just before his death he was brought together with his old schoolmate and ideological adversary, Jean-Paul Sartre, over a common cause—the Vietnamese boat people. It was a rare moment of vindication, a point upon which, characteristically, Aron did not insist.

In these *Memoirs* the author tries to intertwine the narrative of his own life with the particular ideas that engaged him in each successive period. His concerns in the 1930s have already been mentioned. Immediately after World War II he turned to the reconstruction of Western Europe, which for him included integrating the German Federal Republic into the community of Western nations. He also defended the Atlantic Alliance, which at its inception was hugely unpopular in France; in so doing he probably persuaded de Gaulle to mute his own objections to it.

Aron was one of the very first to note the contradiction—until almost yesterday central to European-American relations—among those who "one day criticized the text [of the Atlantic Pact] for not imposing clear obligations on the United States, the next day express[ing] the fear of being drawn by American impetuosity into a war that did not concern them." To Etienne Gilson, the Catholic philosopher who coined the phrase, "the United States is buying our blood with dollars," Aron responded simply, "the United States benefit from a geography that they owe to nature, not to cunning or egotism." Thirty years later, he cannot forebear from observing that "rightly or wrongly, Europe felt threatened by the Soviet Union; it was Europe that asked for American protection. Would it have been enough to sever ties with the United States to assure our security?"

THE 1940s and early 1950s were not a particularly heroic period of French history; the country was divided by social tensions between labor and capital, by grudges dating back to the German occupation and Vichy, and particularly by prolonged colonial wars in Indochina and, later, Algeria. A combination of pragmatism and

[1] On Algeria, de Gaulle eventually reversed himself and adopted Aron's position, but this was many years later, by which time the RPF had dissolved and been replaced by another Gaullist party in which Aron played no role.

[2] These are the titles of the English translations. An extensive bibliography of Aron's work in French and English is provided on pp. 487–91 of his *Memoirs*.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

realism led Aron to advocate early, expeditious withdrawal from colonial territories—a position unusual for someone associated with the French Right, but less common even among members of the French Left than might be assumed today. From the outset he quietly opposed postwar attempts to reestablish French authority in Indochina. Though a passionate friend of Israel, he was appalled by the French decision to join the British expedition at Suez. His pamphlet *L'tragèdie algerienne* (1957), caused a sensation in both France and Algeria, though it merely advocated carrying the "negotiations" with the rebel *Front de Libèration Nationale* to their logical conclusion.

> Negotiations, of course [he paraphrases his argument at the time], but let us have the courage of our thought and action: there will be no negotiations without recognition of the Algerians' right to independence; and this implied that at least a fraction of French Algeria would have to leave.

There was, however, a crucial difference between Aron's views on decolonization and that of the *Tiermondiste* Left of the 1960s. As he told two television interviewers in 1981, "I was not a 'good soul'. . . . I was in favor of Algerian independence, rather than civil war in France."[3] He went on to explain:

> The Algerians had the absolute right to a state of their own, an independent state. But the idea that [one could make] a revolution there in the Western sense, that is to say, the fundamental transformation of society, a better world, etc.—the idea that one could do such a thing throughout the Third World—that seemed to me completely absurd.

"How we detested you when you published *La tragèdie algerienne*," a French Algerian refugee told Aron years later in Paris. "Now we wonder how we could have been so blind. In the end you were the only one who was concerned about us."

France in the 1960s was dominated by General de Gaulle, who resumed power in 1958 after a long period in the political wilderness. Though Aron welcomed his return as the only possible way in which to resolve the issue of Algeria, he deplored much of the General's "grand design," including his opposition to British entry into the Common Market, his withdrawal from the NATO unified military command (and the expulsion of NATO headquarters from France), his encouragement of Willi Brandt's *Ostpolitik*, his gratuitous insult to the Jewish people after the 1967 war between Israel and Egypt, and above all his "legitimat[ion] of anti-Americanism." As Aron puts it,

> He gave the French the habit of seeing the wrong enemy, of taking the Soviet Union as an ally and the American Republic as a Great Power threatening French independence. Twelve years after the General's death, French diplomacy remains partially paralyzed by this inversion of roles, by a vision of the world I consider contrary to reality.

And he adds, with remarkable perspicacity:

> I have always been troubled less by the excessive power of the United States than by the instability of a continent-nation, cast by the fortunes of war into world politics, whose leaders, most of them unaware of the historic fate of the Republic, are driven by the changing currents of world opinion.

Aron's discussion of U. S. foreign policy—which occupies the final section of the book—has a marked bittersweet quality. In spite of having been the sturdiest defender of the United States in European councils of opinion, he immediately foresaw the Vietnam War as a disastrous enterprise. He did, however, feel a certain sympathy for the American dilemma there, which he was wont to remind his compatriots was very different from their own in the late 1940s. (As he put it elsewhere, the French were fighting in Viet-

[3]Raymond Aron, *La Sectateur engagé: entretiens avec Jean-Louis Missika et Dominique Wolton* (Paris: Julliard, 1981), p. 211. This book (English translation, *The Committed Observer* [Chicago: Regnery, 1983]) should be read in tandem with *Memoirs*.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

nam to stay in Indochina, the Americans to be able to leave.) He was surprised and even a bit bemused to find his former protégé Henry Kissinger (who contributes a generous forward to this edition) at the helm of national security affairs, and later, as secretary of state. And he cannot help observing that if anyone other than Kissinger and his chief, Richard Nixon, had been conducting U.S. foreign policy during the early 1970s, "they would have denounced the illusions of detente." As far as Aron was concerned, after Vietnam the American foreign policy establishment "committed suicide," and he asked ironically—writing in the midst of the Carter administration—"Would the General today fear the superiority of the American power?"

The *Memoirs* are not merely an intellectual record but a glimpse at the private side of French and European public life over half a century. They contain many intimate views of the great and near-great, often from unexpected angles. Of Kissinger he writes, "he has respect for me, no doubt, or if you prefer, he does not apply to me the sense of his intellectual superiority which he is said to inflict on mere mortals." He is received by French President René Coty, who immediately "began to speak, leaving me no more than five or ten minutes out of the sixty-five or seventy that our conversation lasted. When I left him, and he stopped talking, he seemed very satisfied with me." "What struck me about [Jean-Paul Sartre] in 1968, and still strikes me today, is the case of Sartre himself, a man of monologue, even though he laid claim to the dialectic." Of Jacques Chirac he writes, "he was a Radical-Socialist in his manner of courting the peasants, a demagogue in large cities in his combative style and his almost infinite capacity to shake hands, always in search of an electoral slogan that he abandons a few days after inventing it." On the subject of General de Gaulle there are many revealing asides, but perhaps the most representative is this: "Even when I agreed with him on essentials, I did not willingly endorse his style. . . . During the last years of his reign, I had the reputation of being one of the non-Gaullists least tolerated by the Prince."

In 1975, Aron told Bernard-Henry Lévy of *Le Nouvel Observateur* that "what condemns me in the eyes of the intelligentsia is that I was right before the truth was obvious to others." The Left, he added, had never forgiven him "for not opening the way for the good society and not having attempted to teach the method for achieving it." Today, however, with a socialist government in power that embraces largely free-market policies at home and an anti-Soviet posture abroad, the French ideological wars appear to have come to an end in a way that no one could have foreseen three or four decades ago.

But more surprising still has been the philosophical victory of Raymond Aron over Jean-Paul Sartre, the liberal-conservative over the Marxist-existentialist, the intellectual committed to truth as opposed to the "committed" intellectual. Aron's posthumous influence has overtaken and completely overshadowed that of his schoolmate from the Ecole Normale on the Rue d'Ulm. It is a subtle and delicious irony—a very French irony—that Mitterand and his ministers now speak in the *aronian* dialect which for so many years was the language of the quintessential outsider in French politics and French intellectual life. We can be glad that Aron himself lived just long enough to savor the spectacle.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

transaction

New and Recent Books on Social History

LEFTWARD JOURNEY
THE EDUCATION OF VIETNAMESE STUDENTS
IN FRANCE, 1919-1939

Scott McConnell
Drawing upon a wide range of newly available archival sources, McConnell examines causes and consequences of the Vietnamese student migration to France after World War I. This goes to the heart of the tragedy that engulfed Vietnam in the postwar era.
ISBN: 0-88738-238-X (cloth) 200 pp. **$34.95**

AN UNDERCURRENT OF SUSPICION
ANTI-COMMUNISM IN AMERICA
DURING WORLD WAR TWO

George Sirgiovanni
When the United States and the Soviet Union briefly stood together as allies against Nazi Germany during World War Two, criticizing the Soviet Union and the Communist party was out of fashion. This book is about those leaders and opinionmakers who chose to be unfashionable
ISBN: 0-88738-122-7 (cloth) 288 pp. **$32.95**

GERMAN JEWRY
ITS HISTORY AND SOCIOLOGY
SELECTED ESSAYS OF WERNER J. CAHNMAN

Joseph B. Maier, Judith Marcus, and Zoltan Tarr, editors
Cahnman combines extensive empirical data with his own background and personal experience for a penetrating analysis of the recent history of Jewish life in Central Europe.
ISBN: 0-88738-253-3 (cloth) 250 pp. **$39.95**

A BETTER WORLD
STALINISM AND THE AMERICAN INTELLECTUALS

William L. O'Neill
With a new introduction by the author
This book chronicles the struggle among non-Communist leftists and liberals over American relations with the Soviet Union from 1939 through the 1050s.
"A well researched and wonderfully readable book." *–The Denver Post*
"Brilliant." *–The New Leader*
ISBN: 0-88738-631-8 (paper) 464 pp. **$19.95**

THE TRANSATLANTIC PERSUASION
THE LIBERAL-DEMOCRATIC MIND
IN THE AGE OF GLADSTONE

Robert Kelly
With a new introduction by the author
This pioneering work explores the single transatlantic community of thought shared by nineteenth century British and Canadian Liberals and American Democrats. It explores the roots of those ideas that comprise a coherent Liberal-Democratic worldview.
ISBN: 0-88738-635-0 (paper) 456 pp. **$19.95**

At your bookstore or direct from the publisher. Major credit cards accepted.
Call (201) 932-2280

transaction publishers
Department SHS1
Rutgers–The State University
New Brunswick, N.J. 08903

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

John le Carré, Glasnostic

Tod Lindberg

I READ JOHN le Carré's *The Russia House** in the room of my hotel on Gorky Street, about 300 yards from the walls of the Kremlin, about a third of a mile from Dzerzhinsky Square and the headquarters of the KGB.

I am pleased to report that there is nothing out of the ordinary about reading a spy novel, or any other sort of novel, in Moscow these days. Glasnost is the order even for the notoriously grim customs officials at Sheremetyevo airport, who took little interest in the contents of my bag—not in the camera and tape recorder; not in the shortwave radio; not in the books by le Carré; not even in a "masterpiece" of socialist realism, Mikhail Sholokhov's *And Quiet Flows the Don*, that I had brought along as a sort of joke on them. The joke was on me. Any provocation I might have had in mind proved to be singularly unprovocative.

Le Carré himself seems to be fairly well known around Moscow, which he has visited several times. *The Russia House*, for which he gathered the local color during his first excursion (at the invitation of the Writer's Union) in 1987, is due to be published in the Soviet Union. Le Carré was also on hand more recently for part of the filming of Tom Stoppard's screenplay based on the novel, which stars Sean Connery and is scheduled for release this fall.

Connery is playing the role of Barley Blair, dissipated British publisher, accomplished jazz saxophonist, and, eventually, spy. Barley's life is mostly a mess—a marriage that didn't work; a long string of meaningless liaisons; an unadventurous publishing house at which he is under the thumb of his powerful aunts; an overfondness for Scotch. But there is something about Russia he finds attractive:

> Why did it always draw me? he wondered. . . .
>
> Because of their making do, he decided. Because they can rough it better than we can. Because of their love of anarchy and their terror of chaos, and the tension in between.
>
> Because God always found excuses not to come here.
>
> Because of their universal ignorance, and the brilliance that bursts through it. Because of their sense of humour, as good as ours and better.
>
> Because they are the last great frontier in an over-discovered world. Because they try so hard to be like us and start from so far back.
>
> Because of the huge heart beating inside the huge shambles. Because the shambles is my own.

Barley traveled to the Soviet Union whenever he could. On one recent visit, he found himself at a dacha in Peredelkino, a hangout

Tod Lindberg, former executive editor of *The National Interest*, is executive editor/news of *Insight*.

*New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989. 353 pp., $19.95.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

for writers and artists. They all hit the bottle, and in the course of the drunken conversation Barley let fly with a ringing pronouncement against the arms race and in favor of rising above political differences in the interest of humanity.

It made a tremendous impression on one thin, bearded figure in particular, a man introduced to him only as "the distinguished writer Goethe." It turns out that Goethe is Yakov Yefremovich Savelyev, a physicist with particular expertise in ballistic missile trajectories. Through an intermediary, a beautiful woman who was once his lover, he attempts to give Barley a manuscript that ultimately lands in the lap of British intelligence. Its content is explosive. It seems that Soviet rocket scientists have been lying to their superiors for years: Soviet missiles are woefully inaccurate. Savelyev wants Barley to publish the manuscript in order to expose the madness of the arms race, perhaps under the title, *The Biggest Lie in the World.*

Needless to say, British intelligence (along with the Americans, who are brought in on strategic matters) has a different idea about what to do with the material from the "Bluebird," Savelyev's code name. They convince Barley to work with them—to go back to Moscow and try to set up a meeting with Savelyev, perhaps to persuade him to defect, in any case to get as much additional information on Soviet capabilities as he can.

JOHN LE CARRÉ, especially in America, has a formidable literary reputation, a reputation out of all proportion to other writers of popular spy fiction. He is always compared to Graham Greene and Dashiell Hammett. He is sometimes compared to Conrad and Dickens.

The novel that made his name was his third, *The Spy Who Came In from the Cold,* published in 1963 when David Cornwell was still a member of the British secret service and so had to write pseudonymously. Whereas most (though not all) spy fiction until that time had been flashy, le Carré's was arch and brooding. Whereas most authors took an unabashedly partisan stand on the Cold War, le Carré wrote of uncertainty, complexity, ambiguity. Whereas the spies hitherto were mostly heroic figures capable of charming the skirts off any glamorous Western or Eastern ladies who crossed their paths, le Carré's Alec Leamas barely manages an affair with a librarian. Whereas the traditional spy knew where he and his operation stood, Leamas is in the dark, thinks he knows more than he does, and is manipulated by those he trusts. Oh yes—and whereas most spies triumphed in the end, Leamas is shot dead at the Berlin Wall.

The success of *The Spy Who Came In from the Cold* (the movie version starred Richard Burton) enabled Cornwell to leave the service. Once his identity and background became known, the press began to besiege him with questions about the factual basis of his novels. He has always denied that he had had much personal experience of spying and that his books are based on intimate acquaintance with the realities of intelligence gathering.

The reason the denials have been necessary is precisely the verisimilitude of the worlds le Carré has depicted. What, after all, do most of us know about spying? What le Carré had, and continues to have, is supreme confidence in his inventions. The "Circus" is the nickname he gave to British intelligence. He uses it flawlessly, putting it in the mouths of the right people at the right time, thereby creating an impression that of course British intelligence is called the Circus. "Control" is its one-time head, the last of the great old spymasters, the only one who still keeps his name secret. The sections of the Circus included the lamplighters, the wranglers, and the listeners. For some reason (and the reason can only be le Carré's precision) they sound right. He never does anything so crude as spell out who is who and what is what. He leaves working out the allusions as an exercise for the reader. An appetite for engaging in this sort of exercise is probably the test of whether or not someone is a le Carré fan.

He has also been praised for a facility for characterization. The most famous of his

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

creations is surely George Smiley, who appears briefly at the end of *The Spy Who Came In from the Cold* (he also appeared in earlier novels) but who comes into his own in *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy* and its two successors, *The Honourable Schoolboy* and *Smiley's People*. Smiley was Control's closest adviser toward the end of the great man's life. But a mysterious operation in Czechoslovakia blew up in Control's face; it disgraced him, resulted in a purge of the Circus that pensioned Smiley off, and Control died shortly thereafter. The action of *Tinker, Tailor* is Smiley's comeback.

Intelligence has been received that a Communist double agent is working near the top of Cambridge Circus (Control had believed this too; that was why he mounted the Czechoslovakia operation). Smiley gets the job of ferreting out the mole. After he eventually exposes the treacherous Bill Haydon, he returns to the helm of what is left of the Circus. From there, he mounts his pursuit of Karla, the top dog of Moscow Centre, the man who ran Bill Haydon and left the Circus a shambles. At the end of *Smiley's People*, he receives his prize in the form of Karla's defection.

Exciting stuff, no doubt. But le Carré has never been interested in heroes with broad shoulders. Smiley stoops, Smiley gets caught in the rain, Smiley eats miserable *coq au vin* and has to wash it down with bad Burgundy. Above all, Smiley embodies "the instinct to dissemble that comes so naturally to us British," as the narrator of *The Russia House* (a post-Smiley novel) puts it. His trade makes discretion a necessity; but for Smiley, it is also a quality of character. He cannot speak his mind. We know, for example, that he reads seventeenth-century German poets; he even laments that they are no longer part of the German curriculum. But what they mean to him, we never learn. His wife, Ann, a beautiful and prominent socialite with extraordinary family connections, is prone to make a cuckold of him. Karla, in fact, thought it would be a good idea for Bill Haydon to sleep with her, which he did. "The last illusion of the illusionless man," Haydon tells Smiley after his capture at the end of *Tinker, Tailor*. "He reckoned that if I were known to be Ann's lover around the place you wouldn't see me very straight when it came to other things."

Smiley is not a happy man. But neither is he unhappy, exactly. He is the embodiment of the world le Carré has been at pains to create, one in which happiness is not possible and disappointment is a daily if not more frequent phenomenon, but one in which people carry on. He is the Cold War, or at least he is John le Carré's version of it.

LE CARRÉ has always had a good feel for the cultural climate in which he writes. The end of World War I led to a general blackening of the mood of serious writers, but it would take until the 1960s for the infection to spread to most creators of popular entertainment. *The Spy Who Came In from the Cold* appeared on the crest of the wave, and the subsequent novels have ridden it out. It is the sort of dreariness that leads, in le Carré's case, to such formulations as, "They walked to her flat through the rain and they might have been anywhere—Berlin, London, any town where paving stones turn to lakes of light in the evening rain, and the traffic shuffles despondently through wet streets." Or, " 'Look,' [Smiley] said, 'we're getting to be old men, and we've spent our lives looking for the weaknesses in one another's systems. I can see through Eastern values just as you can see through our Western ones.' " The absolute classic goes like this, from an East German intelligence bigwig to Alec Leamas: "As he reached the door he looked back and said, 'We're all the same, you know, that's the joke.' "

It is not simply the tony politics, which is present as an excrescence in any number of popular spy novels, that accounts for le Carré's reputation. Rather, it is his attempt to make that politics integral to his characters, to animate them by means of it, to base them on it. If you believed what le Carré believes about the Cold War—and if that were all you believed—you would be George Smiley.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

This is also precisely where le Carré's novels fall apart, or at least their claim to be taken seriously does. Any character whose creator has literary pretensions has to be more than a set of political principles—even a fairly comprehensive (if pinched, crabbed, and equivocating) set. Smiley's taste for German poetry comes up and goes away like name-dropping; it is meant to suggest more than the author can be bothered to get into, namely something human beyond the politics.

For le Carré, the political principles even go so far as to determine the setting. As "they walked to her flat through the rain," could "they" really "have been anywhere"? Only if "the traffic shuffles despondently through wet streets" everywhere. Le Carré says it does, and that is because in his novels, traffic around the world exists for the purpose of serving Cold War gloom.

In *The Russia House*, the principal source of the gloom is the narrator (first person is unusual for le Carré), one Horatio Benedict dePalfrey, a lawyer and counsel to British intelligence (here known as the Service). His job is to prepare documents related to Britain's Official Secrets Act, and by dissembling, to convince people that they have fewer legal options than they do.

Everyone calls him Harry, which is not right, and "old Palfrey," which isn't right either, but what difference does it make, really? He describes himself as "an obedient soul." "Alone in my poky little bachelor flat of an evening, I am quite inclined to call myself Harry while I cook my chop."

Harry has been carrying on an affair of long duration with a married woman named Hannah. "When I catch her face backlit, and glimpse her valiant, vulnerable smile, I see her as I saw her twenty years ago, and tell myself I have not ruined her after all. 'She's all right. Look at her. She's smiling and undamaged. It's Derek, not you, who kicks her around.'

"But I am not sure. Never sure at all." Quite not. Never never. "I am quickly dealt with," he says by way of introduction. "You need not stumble on me long." Harry is pidgin Prufrock.

The internal rationale for the narrative that is *The Russia House* is Harry's effort to recount the history of the Bluebird operation after it has ended in disaster. His traditional le Carrétian sensibility runs throughout the novel. But there is something else at work, something mighty peculiar to run across it in a book by John le Carré: enthusiasm, of all things.

He has created enthusiastic characters before, but he has always done so for the purpose of ridiculing and destroying them. *The Looking Glass War*, the book he wrote just after *The Spy Who Came In from the Cold*, is a prime example. It is about the Department, a British defense intelligence agency that is a poor and jealous cousin to Cambridge Circus. Long stripped of any operational capacity, it is chiefly respected (or humored) for its research section. Its chief is Leclerc, who remembers the Department's World War II days and would like to be more than a bit player in intelligence once again. To this end, he wins approval for putting an agent in East Germany. The operation is a fiasco, the agent is abandoned to face trial and execution, the Department by implication is destroyed.

Enthusiasm of this sort plays a part in *The Russia House* as well; Clive, the ranking member of the Service, is the Brit who is prey to it: "They're preparing a full-scale shopping list, Palfrey, a grand slam. They're taking it to State, Defense, the Pentagon and the scientific bodies. All the biggest questions of the day will be canvassed and set down for the Bluebird to respond to. They know the risks but that isn't deterring them. Nothing ventured, nothing gained, they reason. That takes courage." As the Bluebird affair is blowing up, Clive has "prudently discovered urgent business elsewhere."

Leclerc and Clive are traditional le Carré fools. Their sin is their zest for fighting the Cold War, an overweening attachment to the justice of their cause. Le Carré's ordinary rebuke to them was rude exposure to the bleak world through which George Smiley

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

moves—Smiley, who has "always been embarrassed by protestations of anti-Communism" and who, above all men, is aware of the limitations of his trade. Now, though, le Carré has found glasnost and Gorbachev and ordinary Russians, "the huge heart beating inside the huge shambles."

LE CARRÉ has called *The Russia House* "unashamedly polemical"—drawing on the Cold War "in order to show that it was over for everyone except the professionals." Or as Harry describes Barley Blair's newfound convictions as a spy in Moscow: "The old isms were dead, the contest between Communism and capitalism had ended in a wet whimper. Its rhetoric had fled underground into the secret chambers of the grey men, who were still dancing away long after the music had ended." Barley is by this point firmly on the side of the Bluebird, Yakov Yefremovich Savelyev: "For most of his life, Goethe had stood on one side of the corrupt and anachronistic equation while Barley in his ignorance had stood on the other. . . . [I]f Barley were ever called upon to choose, he would rather go Goethe's path than Ned's [a Service agent] or anybody else's, because his presence would be urgently required in the extreme middle ground of which he had elected himself a citizen.

"As to his loyalty to his country, Barley saw it only as a question of which England he chose to serve. His last ties to the imperial fantasy were dead. The chauvinist drumbeat revolted him. He would rather be trampled by it than march with it. He knew a better England by far, and it was inside himself." Readers attentive to le Carré's ham-handed (or in this case, "unashamedly polemical") way with a theme will recall Barley's notion about a big heart beating inside a big shambles, and that Barley too sees himself as a shambles.

This view is shared by all the characters whom le Carré allows to reach the end of the novel with any shred of dignity remaining. Sheriton of the CIA proclaims, "I am a glasnostic, Harry. I have made certain discoveries about myself. I was born a glasnostic, my parents are old glasnostics from way back. For me, glasnosticism is a way of life. I want my children to live. Quote me and enjoy me." Harry, musing on the difference between the Sheriton before him and the man he had known in London as a cut-throat Cold Warrior, concludes, "It had never occurred to me that I could like him, but that evening I began to."

It also falls to Harry to declaim upon the meaning of the intelligence the Bluebird has provided—or rather, to characterize the interpretation of it by the "grey men." He runs through the theories of the moment:

> Savelyev was not dead.
>
> He had been dead all along, and the version we had dealt with was an impostor.
>
> He was doing what he had always been doing, running the Scientific Disinformation Section of the KGB.
>
> His material was vindicated, was not vindicated.
>
> It was worthless.
>
> It was pure gold.
>
> It was smoke.
>
> It was a truthful message of peace sent to us at immense risk by moderates inside Moscow's ruling ranks in order to show us that the Soviet nuclear sword had rusted in its scabbard and the Soviet nuclear shield had more holes than a colander.
>
> It was a fiendish plot to persuade American faint-hearts to take their fingers off the nuclear trigger.
>
> In short, there was enough for everyone to get his teeth into.

The gray men, as we know from le Carré's previous work, are like that. The old heroes, the Smileys—the best in the ranks, being manifestations of their creator's views—were blessed with self-awareness concerning the ambiguity, but were endowed as well with enough perception to ensure that the novels had a plot: Smiley does get Bill Haydon. The same is true in *The Russia House*. Bluebird *is* for real, as le Carré's right-thinking characters know. But Barley and Goethe and (though he can't quite face the consequences)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Harry himself also know that a bigger game is afoot, that there is a way out in the form of "the extreme middle ground" beyond national loyalty to which one can elect oneself.

There is an attempt at a love interest in *The Russia House*. But fulfilling the minimal requirements for a simulacrum of a woman—and one who speaks English as a second language at that—is beyond the author; it is seventeenth-century German poetry all over again. Again, in literary terms, we find our characters doing no more than acting out le Carré's post-Cold War view.

As he put it in the *New York Times* last September: "What are our Western dreams? Shall we go on dreaming about more refined ways to kill each other—or do we prefer to dream of a partnership of superpowers that could address itself to tomorrow's enemies rather than to yesterday's? Such enemies as drugs, terrorism, poverty, brush fire wars, the pollution of our air, sea, beaches, rivers, forests?"

When *The Russia House* appeared in the United States, the press treated its author to the customary lengthy profiles. Their general theme, it is fair to say, was "John le Carré, In from the Cold"—the old master of the Cold War takes a new look at things in the wake of the rise of Gorbachev in the Soviet Union.

Nothing could be farther from the truth. There is a remarkable consistency of view from *The Spy Who Came In from the Cold* to *The Russia House*. You might call the old ones *ashamedly* polemical, not quite willing to overtly reach the conclusion implicit in them, the one Barley reaches in *The Russia House*: the need for men of good faith to grasp the extreme middle ground. "As to his loyalty to his country, Barley saw it only as a question of which England he chose to serve." He chooses the one in his heart, which means he is indifferent to the one on the map.

Which takes me, more or less, back to my hotel room in Moscow. To tell the truth, I think that a "huge heart beating inside the huge shambles" is not a bad turn of phrase to describe the Soviet people and the Soviet Union. But I did not find it to be the colossally self-important heart of John le Carré. Here are people who want to live ordinary lives and have been systematically prevented from doing so for seventy years. In the age of glasnost, many of them are saying just that. They are not the least bit embarrassed by years and years and years of Western nations' protestation of anti-Communism.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The House that Adenauer Built

Jacob E. Heilbrunn

GERMAN UNITY, a certainty since the opening of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989 has taken an unexpected turn with the triumph of the conservative coalition in the East German elections of March 18, 1990. Though decried by both West and East German partisans as an *Anschluss*, or annexation, of a third way between capitalism and communism, that triumph promises *one* solidly democratic Germany tied to the West and bound firmly to NATO. Yet while the elections may have temporarily stemmed the tide of pessimistic assessments of the perils of German unity, critics of reunification continue to voice their fears.[1] Michael Lerner's comment in the March/April 1990 issue of *Tikkun* is still not untypical: "I resist the idea that Germans deserve reunification, that they've served their time and now can forget the past (something that most of them managed to do almost instantaneously in 1945)."

Dennis Bark and David Gress's two volume history of West Germany, *From Shadow To Substance* and *Democracy And Its Discontents*, thus arrives opportunely.* Bark and Gress have written the first comprehensive account in English of West German history in which the authors seek to dispel any lingering doubts as to West Germany's adherence to democratic values. In what amounts to a "Whig interpretation" of that history, the authors chronicle the progress of West German democracy from its modest beginnings to its present prosperity. Above all, they wish to demonstrate that the Federal Republic has been "a stable and successful democracy, offering more freedom with responsibility and better chances for a satisfying material and spiritual life for its citizens than any other state that has ever existed in Germany."

From Shadow to Substance devotes much attention to the reconstruction and division of Germany between 1945 and 1949; to Chancellor Konrad Adenauer; to the 1952 Stalin Note; and to the successive Berlin crises. The emphasis on foreign, rather than domestic, policy becomes even more pronounced in the second volume, *Democracy and its Discontents*. Willy Brandt and Helmut Schmidt's efforts to promote *Ostpolitik*, or detente with the East, are minutely traced. Bark and Gress then turn to the emotion-laden 1983 Euromissile debate. They end their study

Jacob E. Heilbrunn, a former assistant editor at *The National Interest*, is a writer in Washington, D.C.

[1] For an extensive review of those apprehensions, see Michael Lind, "German Fate & Allied Fears," *The National Interest*, no. 19 (Spring 1990).

*A *History of West Germany, Volume I: From Shadow To Substance 1945–1963*, 579 pp., $35.00; *Volume II: Democracy and its Discontents 1963–1988*, 567 pp., $35.00 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

(which was completed before the fall of the Wall itself) with Helmut Kohl's rise to power and tenure as chancellor.

It might seem today as if West Germany's present place in the Western alliance was an inevitable outcome of the Allied victory in 1945. As the authors show, however, nothing could be further from the truth. The wartime allies, at first implacably hostile to Germany, were determined to exploit the country. The Russians devoted themselves to pillaging, looting, and transporting German factories to the East. The United States (which had toyed with and rejected the Morgenthau Plan for transforming Germany into a pastoral society) pursued the goals of Joint Chiefs of Staff declaration 1067, which stated that Germany was to be treated not as a nation liberated, but rather as one to be punished. France and Britain also exacted reparations from Germany. In addition, France was intent on limiting German industrialization; the British Labour government, on transforming it into a socialist country in order to immunize German industry against fascism.

At the same time, with most major German cities reduced to rubble by Allied bombing, the Soviets and Poles increased the misery by expelling ethnic Germans from Silesia, East Prussia, and Pomerania. Two million Germans perished as a direct result of this barbaric expulsion; and at least seven million fled to the Western zones of Germany. There were still other obstacles to Germany's recovery.

AT THE TIME of West Germany's birth, capitalism was widely viewed as an extinct economic species. British historian A.J.P. Taylor could state as obvious that "nobody in Europe believes in the American way of life—that is, in private enterprise; or rather those who believe in it are a defeated party and a party which seems to have no more future than the Jacobites in England after 1688." Bark and Gress agree: "Belief in the values of capitalism was almost completely dead in 1945, in Germany, and indeed in Western Europe generally." Even the conservative West German Christian Democrats (CDU) announced in their 1947 Ahlen program that "the capitalistic system has not done justice to the national and social interest of the German people."

But for once the Germans were in luck—specifically, in the person of the ex-mayor of Cologne. As Bark and Gress show, the cunning, patriarchal Konrad Adenauer "provided what the Germans desperately needed—clear, firm, imaginative, and realistic leadership." Adenauer's goal was to tie the Federal Republic inextricably to its Western allies, thus putting an end to Germany's historical flirtation with neutralism and alliances with the East. Together with Finance Minister Ludwig Erhard—like Adenauer, a champion of free markets and a foe of central planning—he engineered the *Wirtschaftswunder*, the economic miracle that brought domestic stability to Germany. Adenauer also exploited the Cold War to advance his goal of West German sovereignty.

Yet all Adenauer's perseverance would not by itself have been enough to ensure success. Every bit as important was the U.S. decision to abandon its purblind policy of punishing the German people and to rebuild Germany as a bulwark against renewed Soviet aggression. It is surprising, in fact, that Bark and Gress spend so little time on the *American* contribution to the reconstruction of Germany. As John Vaizey noted in *The Squandered Peace*, West Germany was "largely an American creation, and the American presence in Europe was in the main due to the need to save Germany." Bark and Gress largely overlook two other turning points in the Federal Republic's history: Socialist party leader Kurt Schumacher's success in blocking Soviet efforts to control the Socialist party in the Western zones of Germany; and Adenauer's transformation of what had, during the Weimar Republic, been radical conservatism into a moderate and responsible variety.

As Bark and Gress see it, the Korean War exercised decisive influence on West Germany's future as a member of the West-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ern alliance. The war "saved the German economy" by increasing demand for German industrial products. Moreover, they argue, it "provided Adenauer the opportunity to take the initiative toward regaining sovereignty, if he made a bold move to offer a German contribution to European defense. . . . "

Adenauer's most controversial decision was his refusal to enter into negotiations with the Soviet Union on the basis of Stalin's March 1952 note proposing neutrality as the price for German reunification. That note exposed the divisions within West Germany on the issue of reunification. Kurt Schumacher, courageous Socialist leader and a German nationalist, was eager to enter negotiations. Jakob Kaiser, a leading figure in the Berlin CDU, was prepared to discuss the Soviet note. Bark and Gress do not mention that both the State Department and Whitehall took the note seriously. Terrified that the Western powers might accept German neutrality as a basis for four-power talks on German reunification, Adenauer persuaded the Americans and the other allies to rebuff Stalin's note. Adenauer was more interested in cooperating with the French and in anchoring Germany to the West than he was in unification. We learn from Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick, head of the British Foreign Office in the 1950s, that "Dr Adenauer had no confidence in the German people. . . . [H]e felt that the integration of Western Germany with the West was more important than the unification of Germany."

Like Charles de Gaulle, Adenauer considered the Americans fitful and capricious allies. Therefore, Adenauer made great efforts to link France to the Federal Republic. When Adenauer and de Gaulle met in July 1960 in Rambouillet, de Gaulle proposed a European defense union founded on an alliance between France and West Germany. Even though Adenauer "suspected that the U.S. would ultimately prove unreliable and be willing to compromise West German interests in order to appease Khrushchev," he realized that France was not militarily powerful enough to replace the U.S. Whatever U.S. shortcomings—and to Adenauer, they were legion—the United States remained the key to West German stability.

President Kennedy in particular justified Adenauer's skepticism. When the Berlin Wall was erected in August 1961, Kennedy did little to protest this egregious violation of four-power rights in Berlin. Nor were Adenauer and the CDU the only Germans contemptuous of Kennedy. Willy Brandt, then mayor of West Berlin, was incensed by the U.S. capitulation to Khrushchev. Hitherto, Brandt had been a cold warrior and a loyal supporter of the U.S. With the U.S. failure to respond forcefully to the building of the Wall, Brandt realized that "a curtain was drawn aside to reveal an empty stage. To put it more bluntly, we lost certain illusions that had outlived the hopes underlying them. . . . " Brandt now believed that, since the U.S. was unwilling to protect German interests, West Germany would have to strike out on its own path of detente with the East bloc in general and East Germany in particular. (Still, during the early 1960s, Atlanticist Social Democrats—who admired Kennedy's efforts toward a global detente—were often "more pro-American than the Christian Democrats.")

During the 1960s, the West forced West Germany to seek detente at a quick pace. Erhard, on becoming chancellor in 1963, felt compelled to announce that "We do not want *less* but *more* detente." As Bark and Gress see it, even after the invasion of Czechoslovakia and the declaration of the Brezhnev Doctrine, by the 1970s the principal difference between the CDU and SPD was not whether but at what pace *Ostpolitik* should be pursued.

While Bonn promoted detente throughout the 1970s, it was West German chancellor Helmut Schmidt who in 1977 applied pressure on the U.S. to defend Western Europe adequately. Schmidt pointed to the growing discrepancy in the nuclear capabilities of NATO and Warsaw Pact forces. President Carter resisted the option of placing intermediate-range nuclear forces to respond to the build-up of Soviet SS–20s and instead

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

announced the production of the neutron bomb. Schmidt supported his decision. And then, as the authors note, "in a gesture almost without parallel in American diplomatic history for its ineptitude," Carter decided to delay its production.

However, the left wing of the SPD, now grown predominant, forced Schmidt out of office over the deployment of the Pershing missiles. The 1982 *Wende*, or turn, when Helmut Kohl succeeded Schmidt as chancellor, turned out to be a continuation of socialist *Ostpolitik*. In large part, this was because the Free Democrats, historically the coalition swing partner and led by the able Hans-Dietrich Genscher, continued in control of the foreign office, and thus West German foreign policy. Optimistically—and as it turns out, correctly—Bark and Gress conclude with the observation that "The division of Germany, and the Wall that divides Berlin, will not last forever. . . . But of one thing there is certainty. Germany will play a major role in the future of freedom and peace in the center of the European continent."

BARK AND GRESS have produced a splendid reference work with much valuable information. This work falls somewhat short of its authors' own ambitions, however. In the introduction, they assert that "We have our own views and do not hide them. We believe that the history of the Federal Republic. . . has a great deal to teach about freedom and commitment, and about the value of having the courage of your convictions." In light of this exciting note, the cautious narrative that follows may come as a bit of a disappointment. Many chapters, in fact, are so painstakingly devoid of opinion that they read like entries for an encyclopedia. One is left wishing to know a little less of German history, and a little more of the authors's own views of their subject.

Of the interpretations they do offer, at least a few offer grounds for dissent. Their approach to Germany's Nazi past is troubling and reveals a general insouciance about the era. The authors detail at length the terrible suffering that the Germans expelled from the eastern territories endured; but they allude only elliptically to the Holocaust and the Allied discovery of the death camps. "Very few people in Western Europe or in the United States," they write, "knew or wanted to know about the expulsions. Public attention was focused, instead, on what the Germans had done to the Jews and other victims. Of all the tragedies that were to emerge. . . the realities of the concentration camps were the most grotesque." A harrowing one-page citation on the British discovery of Bergen-Belsen follows. That page is the extent of Bark and Gress's discussion of the Holocaust in this chapter. Immediately following their one-page quote, the authors abruptly shift to their account of Berlin, quoting an account of Soviet atrocities against the German population.

Bark and Gress defend Adenauer's aide, Hans Globke, co-drafter of the notorious 1935 Nuremberg Laws. They assert that Globke's generous interpretation of the Nuremberg Laws allowed thousands of Jews to emigrate from Germany. That assertion itself is doubtful, and disputed by others. Yet even if it were true, surely Adenauer's willingness to retain a high-ranking official of the Third Reich as his closest adviser reflected poorly on his judgement. More convincing is Bark and Gress's conclusion that "the vast majority of Germans were, in fact, denazified—not by the tribunals, but by the war and by changes in society and in their own beliefs."

Their coverage of the *Historikerstreit*, or historian's battle, is also curious. That battle—which created an uproar in the Federal Republic—concerned the singularity of the Holocaust. It was precipitated by Ernst Nolte, a professor of history at the Free University of Berlin. Nolte argued that when Chaim Weizmann (then president of the Jewish Agency) wrote an open letter to Neville Chamberlain in September of 1939 saying that the Jews would "fight on the side of the democracies," the letter was "something like a declaration of war on Germany." Thus,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Hitler, according to Nolte, may have had reasonable grounds for interning German Jews as prisoners of war. Nolte went on to state that Auschwitz was "not the result of traditional anti-Semitism," but instead was "above all reaction, born of fear to the process of annihilation of the Russian Revolution." In essence, Nolte attempted to relativize the Nazi extermination of European Jewry: according to him, Hitler's attempt to kill the Jews was perhaps simply an " 'Asiatic' deed."

After presenting Nolte's views, Bark and Gress offer what amounts to a qualified defense of them, in the form of criticism of his opponents: "Most of Nolte's attackers had a prior commitment to a certain view of the Holocaust and the matter of German guilt and therefore discarded or condemned Nolte's purpose. . . . " To be sure, the well-known political theorist Jürgen Habermas's charge—that a conspiracy of right-wing historians existed who wished to provide the Federal Republic with an acceptable nationalist past—was preposterous. But this does not excuse Nolte's destructive meditations.

It is puzzling that Bark and Gress come down hard on the student Left and the peace movement yet are cautious in condemning the SPD's close ties with the East German Communist party (SED). It was the SPD that steadily worked to legitimize the SED, conducting working groups on security issues with them, and, incredibly, signing with the SED a joint "Principles of Dialogue" statement. It was Willy Brandt who referred in 1987 to German reunification as the "living lie of the second German republic," and it was Brandt who dismissed as "old crusaders" those who denounced human rights violations in the East bloc.

Nineteen eighty-three was a turning point for the Federal Republic in particular and the West in general. In the face of widespread fear of new missiles—which should not be confused with support for left-wing causes—both Kohl and Foreign Minister Genscher demonstrated great courage in steadfastly declaring that the missiles be installed. Bark and Gress pass lightly over Genscher's singularly important role in the Pershing debate. He stoutly defended the deployment of Pershing missiles in the Bundestag, and although the authors do not mention it, Genscher warned that fears of "a new kind of unpredictable German neutralism" existed. He insisted that the Free Democrats jettison the SPD and join the CDU in a coalition government, earning in the process the obloquy of the German Left. Genscher's party, the Free Democrats, lost votes in the March 1983 federal elections for what was viewed by many Germans as an unscrupulous betrayal of Schmidt. Had Genscher not formed a coalition with Kohl, the Bundestag would not have approved the deployment of the Pershing missiles—and it might have been NATO, not the Warsaw Pact, that would face dissolution before the end of the decade.

SUCH DRAWBACKS, however, need not obscure what Bark and Gress have accomplished here. And while it is true that they failed to perceive the debility of the communist East, that fault is widely shared. Both the Left and Right throughout the West failed utterly to foresee the cataclysmic events that would transform Europe and the map of Germany. In the December 21, 1989 *London Review of Books*, the distinguished historian J.P. Stern asked why "there was not the slightest intimation" of the impending collapse of East Germany among historians. He concluded:

> One reason for the failure of imagination among Western intellectuals. . . is their lingering distrust of that state [the Federal Republic] and especially of its democratic spirit. . . . The old anxiety about what the Germans are up to is accompanied not only by a consistently apologetic attitude towards the Government of the GDR, but also by ignorance of Central Europe's deep longing for liberty, and a lack of faith in what the West has to offer its populations.

That much certainly explains the Left's inadequacy on this score. But what of the Right—

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and of Bark and Gress, who have written a *sympathetic* history of the Federal Republic? Perhaps the answer is that the authors, transfixed by the history of the Federal Republic itself, devoted little attention to East Germany. They attempted to view the Federal Republic's history, as much as possible, in isolation from that of the GDR's. Thus they, like many others, overlooked signs of the once-ruling Communist party's decrepitude. In the summer of 1987, thousands of young East Germans, incensed that they could not attend a David Bowie rock concert on the other side of the Wall, gathered at the Berlin Wall and chanted "Die Mauer muss weg!" ("The Wall must go!"). In 1989, the authorities forbade school children to hang pictures of Gorbachev in their classrooms, and Soviet magazines and films were censored.

Throughout the 1980s, most Western journalists and scholars, viewing the GDR as a dull backwater, ignored it. We were assured that East Germans were different from the rest of the East bloc: they were obedient, they were proud of their economic progress, and they had forged a new identity as East Germans. Thus, we were told, East Germans did not want reunification. For example, John Ardagh wrote in the March 1987 issue of *Encounter* that:

> People have come to identify with the GDR and to see it as their home, and especially this is so now that a whole new generation has grown up that never knew the days before the Wall. Many people have even come to be vaguely proud of the GDR, and they resent being patronized by affluent visitors from West Germany who tell them how unfortunate they are.

All this, we now know, was a Western delusion. When it came to the stability of communist regimes, it turns out, neither the Right nor the Left made clear distinctions between communist propaganda and reality.

Today, it remains equally important to distinguish between illusion and reality in West and East Germany. The specter of a virulent nationalism in a united Germany was, it is important to remember, first conjured up by the East German Communist party. It was the new SED leader, Gregor Gysi, who in December 1989 darkly warned that the absorption of East Germany by the FRG would mean that "a nationalistic frenzy would break out here. If one border falls, all the others, from Bessarabia to Tyrol are endangered." Western commentators would do well to ignore such self-serving predictions and realize instead that Adenauer's vision of a united Germany tied to the West—so long-standing, so long underestimated—has been vindicated.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Richard Nixon and the Ruling Elite

George Szamuely

EARLY IN 1973 and before anyone could have suspected that Richard Nixon's second term in office would come to an abrupt end, Walter Lippmann said of the President to a *Washington Post* reporter:

> His role has been that of a man who had to liquidate, defuse, deflate the exaggerations of the romantic period of American imperialism and American inflation. Inflation of promises, inflation of hopes, the Great Society, American supremacy—all that had to be deflated because it was all beyond our power.

The great pundit meant that as a compliment and Nixon took it as such, scribbling "A wise observation" on his daily News Summary. That comment stands in some contrast to Nixon's feelings for Lippmann a few years earlier. Then, the not-yet President had expressed disgust at "how much influence Walter Lippmann, with his unbelievably muddy thinking, has on so-called intellectuals in this country."

To some, the contrast between those quotes no doubt substantiates the two charges that inveterate Nixon-haters have long accepted as articles of faith. First, that throughout his career Nixon believed in nothing; that he had no agenda; that his position on most things took much the course they did on the issue of communism, where he was "hard" and "soft" and "hard" again as fashion dictated. He adhered to no principle, the charge continues, save the furtherance of his political ambitions; that he was, as Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. once characterized him, "obsessed with appearances rather than with the reality of things, obsessed above all with his own image, seeking reassurance through winning, but never knowing why he is so mad to win or what he will do with his victory."

Then there is the second charge—that though today Richard Nixon may never have anything but a good word to say for everyone (quoting with approval the wise sayings of Edmund Muskie, for instance), during his public life he was the hater *par excellence*. According to Stephen Ambrose's *Nixon: The Triumph of a Politician*, the objects of his venom included

> . . . the college professors, and their students. The editors and reporters, especially those on the staffs of the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*. The television newscasters. . . . All Democrats from outside the South. All Republicans from east of the Ohio and north of the Potomac. Most members of his Cabinet. The "American leader class" with its whining and whimpering. Big-business men. All bureaucrats, especially those in the State Department, the IRS, the Justice Department. . . and the CIA. Welfare recipients. Blacks. Social workers.

George Szamuely writes regularly for *Commentary*, *Insight*, the *American Spectator*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and other publications.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

That is certainly quite a formidable list. Yet it leaves unanswered, as does Ambrose, that most interesting of questions about Nixon: Were his hatreds the product of some deep-seated psychological maladjustment, as his enemies would have it, or expressions of rage on the part of a President frustrated at every turn from enacting his agenda? And what of that more famous list, comprised of names which read as if they were taken out of the *Who's Who* of postwar liberal icons, and which at one time or another were intertwined with Nixon's own in deadly enmity: Jerry Voorhis, Alger Hiss, Helen Douglas, JFK, George McGovern, Archibald Cox? Should that in itself not tell us something about Nixon's beliefs and principles?

For as Nixon's new volume of memoirs as well as the three recently published biographies makes clear,* not only was the thirty-seventh President a man of strongly-held convictions, but the positions he took—and continues to take on most issues—show a remarkable consistency. Lippmann's observation of Nixon goes to the root of the man. Nixon has always been rather pessimistic about America—about its addiction to drugs, its media, its education system, its lack of discipline, its cult of instant gratification, its inability to pursue an intelligent, consistent foreign policy. Many of these views were shared by adversaries who preceded or succeeded him; for example, McGeorge Bundy and George Kennan. During the Vietnam War, for instance, Nixon noted in his diary:

> If we fail it will be because the American way simply isn't as effective as the Communist way. . . . I have an uneasy feeling that this may be the case. We give them the most modern arms, we emphasize the material to the exclusion of the spiritual and the Spartan life, and it may be that we soften them up rather than harden them up for the battle.

America's apparent triumph since those dark days clearly puzzles him. At home, after all, not that much has changed. America's ruling elite is as ineffectual today as it was in his own day. Back in 1972 he observed in his diary: "The American leader class has really had it in terms of their ability to lead. It's really sickening to have to receive them at the White House as I often do and to hear them whine and whimper. . . ." Eighteen years later, in his new book, *In the Arena*, the refrain continues:

> America's leadership class will be remembered for the role it played in helping lose two wars: the war in Vietnam and, at least so far, the war on drugs. The leadership class is made up of highly educated and influential people in the arts, the media, the academic community, the government bureaucracies, and even business. They are characterized by intellectual arrogance, an obsession with style, fashion, and class, and a permissive attitude on drugs.

In Nixon's view, then and now, America's ruling elite bungled the Vietnam War from start to finish. Excessive moralism prevented American military intervention on behalf of the French at Dienbienphu (an action he had urged as vice president). Excessive moralism led to the American encouragement of the overthrow of Ngo Dinh Diem. Overweening arrogance resulted in Americans undertaking military combat in place of the South Vietnamese. On top of that, once having decided that the cause in Vietnam was lost, Nixon's domestic adversaries did not give him even minimal support in his attempt to execute an orderly withdrawal, frivolously disregarding the consequences of military defeat for the continuance of American power and influence in the world. (On this issue, incidentally, Nixon saw himself at odds not only with the Establishment, but even with Henry

*Richard Nixon, *In the Arena: A Memoir of Victory, Defeat & Renewal* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990), 384 pp., $21.95; Stephen E. Ambrose, *Nixon: The Triumph of a Politician, 1962–1972* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989), 736 pp., $24.95; Herbert S. Parmer, *Richard Nixon and His America* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 1990), 755 pp., $24.95; and Roger Morris, *Richard Milhous Nixon: The Rise of an American Politician* (New York: Henry Holt, 1990), 1005 pp., $24.95.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Kissinger. He noted in his diary: "Henry, with all his many virtues, does seem too often to be concerned about preparing the way for negotiations with the Soviets. . . . [He seems] to have an idea. . . that even if we fail in Vietnam we can still survive politically. I have no illusions whatever on that score. . . . ")

Moreover, Nixon was convinced the offspring of the ruling elites were behind the antiwar movement, the sit-ins, the campus protests, and so on. Just as it was the offspring of the working class who had to do the job in Southeast Asia, so it would be this son of a grocer and product of Whittier College who would be forced to carry the brunt of the Paris Accords.

AND IT WAS not just Vietnam. The Kennedy and Johnson administrations had undertaken massive strategic build-ups, yet had stopped and allowed the Russians to catch up. When the "Establishment" lost its will to continue, it was left to Nixon to formalize this strategic "equality" with the ABM Treaty and the SALT agreement. The first legitimized Soviet superiority in deployed ABM systems; the second, its superiority in nuclear throwweight. The gap between rhetoric and reality had to be closed. Instead of Kennedy's willingness "to bear any burden, to pay any price," there was now the Nixon Doctrine, with its relatively limited goals. The detente policy itself often seemed like a way of enticing the Soviets into agreements to prevent them from doing what Americans were no longer capable of doing. Nixon's diplomatic triumph—the opening to the most populous communist nation on earth—as well as his famous 1971 proclamation that the future world order would comprise five major power centers (the U.S., Japan, Western Europe, China, and the Soviet Union) heralded the substitution of balance-of-power politics for the classic "containment" policy. The United States was to be one player among many, unable any longer to thwart Soviet ambitions by itself.

It is ironic that Nixon, so excoriated by conservatives for his policy of detente, should today be one of the leading "hawks" on the subject of the Soviet Union. Yet Nixon's views have not really undergone that much change. He believed then, and he believes now, that Soviet power is at a dangerous level. It just happens that today he is one of the few people to believe this. He is in awe of Gorbachev, claiming that he "is playing chess, while we are playing checkers." Of his meeting with the Soviet leader in 1986, Nixon writes today that "Gorbachev knew that the Soviet Union was now superior in the most powerful and accurate strategic weapons, land-based inter-continental missiles. Unlike Khrushchev and Brezhnev, Gorbachev was so confident of his strengths that he did not fear talking about his weaknesses." And, he adds, while "Gorbachev might have changed tactics, the Kremlin's geopolitical goals remain the same." Nixon does not believe Ronald Reagan had anything to do with the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe. Instead, he argues, it came about as a result of those "changed tactics." Since Gorbachev's goal is not to replace communism, but to strengthen it,

> he wants to gain access to Western capital and technology. He knows his economic reforms cannot succeed without this assistance, and he is willing to pay a geopolitical price. . . . In Eastern Europe, this meant acquiescing in the collapse of Soviet regional domination in order to make a play for a far more important target—the psychological disarmament of Western Europe.

And, of course, Nixon continues to be pessimistic about the influence "Americans with graduate degrees" will exert on any policy to attempt to counter Gorbachev.

It is tempting to locate Nixon's disdain for America's ruling elites in his humble origins, his Quaker background, his attendance at Whittier College, his time as a freshman congressman on the House Committee on Un-American Activities when he came into bitter and fateful conflict with Alger Hiss, a supposed pillar of the Establishment. Thus the common image of Richard Nixon—the ambitious, socially awkward

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

outsider, making up in hard work and resentment what he lacks in grace and privilege. Certainly Herbert Parmet and Roger Morris succumb to the temptations of that image in their biographies of Nixon. Thus Parmet: "No contrast was more vivid, and potentially galling, than [Nixon's] early view of Jack Kennedy. From that first month in the Congress and for the rest of his career, Kennedy was a figure who was never very far from the Nixon mind. . . . Kennedy's station in life made him successful by definition. He was Nixon's foil." And all of this, Parmet argues, helped shape Nixon's philosophy, including even his hatred of communism:

> The basis for his objections was less the economic implications than the notion of communism as inherently wedded to bureaucracy, a bureaucracy that would inevitably. . . be controlled by a ruling elite. That elite was the establishment, whether in the Soviet Union or elsewhere.

Plausible though such a reading might be, it is surely wrong. For one thing, however humble his background, Nixon's rise was astonishingly rapid: a congressman at the age of 33, a senator at 37, and a vice president at 39. Though JFK was the youngest man ever to be elected President, Nixon was only three years older. While in later years Nixon would argue that Alger Hiss was the epitome of the Eastern Establishment and that by taking him on he had earned its undying hatred, both Parmet and Morris show that he won far more accolades than attacks. As Morris puts it: "Nixon would emerge from the case much as he began it, seen among his peers as the relative moderate, his moderation. . . [only] rendering the Red-baiting cause more respectable, an accommodating, largely uncritical press making him a national figure and his politics a national craze."

Even the antagonism between Kennedy and Nixon can be exaggerated. Kennedy, according to Morris, "would be there in half-expedient, half-admiring cordiality for Richard Nixon, passing along Joseph Kennedy's furtive campaign contributions, sending a warm personal note of congratulations on Dick's advance through the ranks." Moreover, it is ludicrous to see Nixon as an embittered and unreconstructed class-warrior, unable to distinguish an Alger Hiss from a Dean Acheson. Unfortunately, though Herbert Parmet's book has many virtues, it does at times suggest something like this.

CONTRARY TO what his biographers claim, Nixon's disdain for America's ruling elite is based on his objections to postwar liberalism—not vice-versa. It was not so much old money he objected to, but new money, or rather the "new class." Postwar liberalism, in Nixon's view, was the ideology of this "new class" aspiring to total power in America—power in the arts, in the media, in the bureaucracy, in the judiciary, in the education system. Parmet's account itself shows that the secret of Nixon's successes, of his ability to withstand numerous crises, was only in part due to his personal fortitude; more important was his remarkable gift for giving voice to the aspiring middle class—in America, the bulk of the population. Even during the 1950s, Parmet writes, "Nixon's antielitist, antiestablishment, and proentrepreneurial views" were received with far greater popular enthusiasm than "Eisenhower's ideal of a 'corporate commonwealth.' " Nixon's critics never understood the significance of his Checkers speech. As Parmet notes, "derision came from . . . [the] well-educated, affluent, urban, and prominent in the professions as well as the media." In the rest of the country, meanwhile—the country of the "postwar forgotten man," as Parmet puts it—the speech went down very well.

Many years ago Murray Kempton described the 1950s as "the decade when the American lower class in the person of Nixon moved to engrave in the history of the United States, as the voice of America, its own faltering spirit, its self-pity and its envy, its continual anxiety about what the wrong people might think, its whole peevish, resentful whine." Much the same sort of thing has been

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

written about Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan. But Nixon was the first to give expression to the conservative political philosophy that we associate with these two leaders. He was the first to grasp how vulnerable the New Deal coalition was and he tore into it with gusto. Long before George Bush, he understood that the politics of symbols was far more important than the so-called "bread-and-butter" issues. The intellectual shift from "equal rights" to "minority rights"; the transfer of resources from the "working poor" to the "nonworking poor" or to the middle-class bureaucrat; the change from desegregation to enforced integration—each manifested for Nixon the same elite's arrogant attempts to mold the country in its own image. That conservatives have won five of the last six presidential elections owes more than a little to the widespread resentment at this state of affairs. Commenting on Nixon's 1950 Senate run against Helen Douglas, Parmet notes that his "overall strategy in the McGovern campaign was a virtual replay of what he used against Douglas; split the Democrats and siphon off the discontented and disillusioned." As Roger Morris shows, long before Reagan used his former status as a Democrat to political advantage, Nixon in both his 1948 congressional race and in his Senate race sent out flyers entitled "As One Democrat to Another" (though, to be sure, Nixon was not and never had been a Democrat).

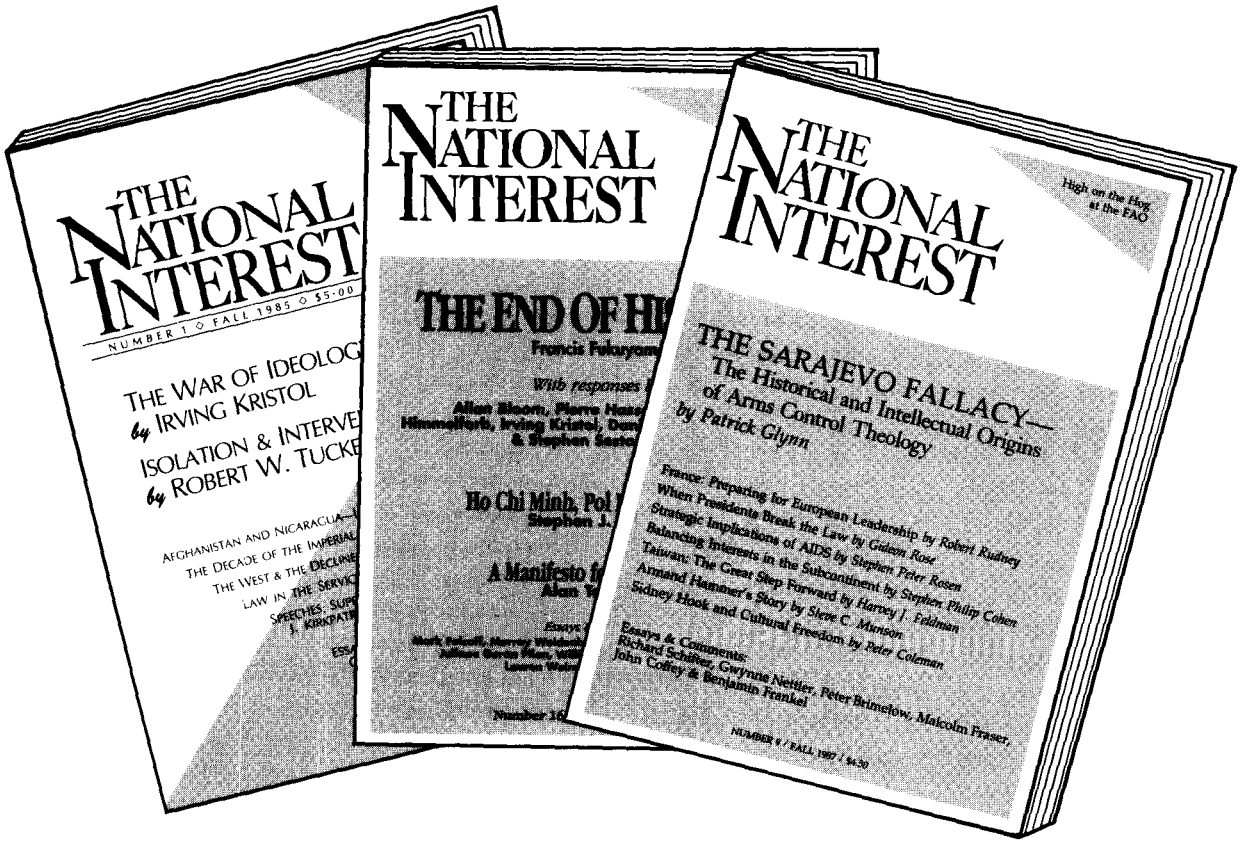
During the years of the Nixon presidency there was much talk of "southern strategy," the "New American Majority," the "silent majority." Such talk established a new style of conservative populism, one that appealed to voters over the heads of the "new class." Reagan and Bush, however, have both lacked the biting edge of Nixonian populism. Neither man has had the soft spot for the blue-collar worker that Nixon had. Stephen Ambrose records how Nixon loved to romanticize working men. In Nixon's words, George Meany, former boss of the AFL-CIO, had "backbone, guts, and all the things a lot of our businessmen lost years ago." The working class had "whatever is left of the character of this country." The AFL-CIO's refusal to endorse the candidacy of George McGovern was a major triumph for Nixon. At one time Nixon instructed Haldeman, the White House chief of staff, to "quit recruiting from any of the Ivy League schools." It is interesting to wonder what might have happened to conservative politics had Watergate not intervened. Would a "Nixon revolution" have turned around the fortunes of the national Republican party?

The Nixon presidency was more embattled than any other. Nixon had two Supreme Court justices rejected by the Senate. Congress, dominated at that time by formidable liberals like Mansfield, Bayh, Kennedy, McGovern, Church, and Fulbright, offered him minimum cooperation on Vietnam, rejected arms procurement programs, and indeed almost passed the Mansfield amendment proposing immediate troop withdrawals from Western Europe. His own Justice Department and the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare were ignoring his instructions and were plunging ahead with enforced integration suits. His own Environmental Protection Agency, he was convinced, was sabotaging U.S. industry. The "clowns" at the CIA failed to predict the impending coup against Sihanouk in Cambodia; the media were unpatriotic; the Supreme Court failed to act against pornography or decisively against crime.

It is easy to understand Nixon's fantasies of the need for a total shake-up among the elites—the creation of a "new Establishment," as he put it to Haldeman. He asked for and got the resignation of every single member of his administration upon his reelection. Yet the complacent manner in which he adopted the defeatist foreign policy of the detested "leader class" sits oddly with this battle he was waging on every other front. One can only speculate that perhaps Nixon was ahead of his time. By the time Reagan was swept to power, not only did he manage to win control of the Senate, but the intellectual groundwork for a conservative public philosophy had already been laid.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Need Back Issues?


THE NATIONAL INTEREST
NUMBER 1 ◇ FALL 1985 ◇ $5.00
THE WAR OF IDEOLOG
by IRVING KRISTOL
ISOLATION & INTERVE
by ROBERT W. TUCKE
THE NATIONAL INTEREST
THE END OF HI
Francis Fukuyam
THE NATIONAL INTEREST
High on the Hog at the FAO
THE SARAJEVO FALLACY—
The Historical and Intellectual Origins of Arms Control Theology
by Patrick Glynn
France: Preparing for European Leadership by Robert Rudney
When Presidents Break the Law by Gideon Rose
Strategic Implications of AIDS by Stephen Peter Rosen
Balancing Interests in the Subcontinent by Stephen Philip Cohen
Taiwan: The Great Step Forward by Harvey J. Feldman
Armand Hammer's Story by Steve C. Munson
Sidney Hook and Cultural Freedom by Peter Coleman
Essays & Comments:
Richard Schifter, Gwynne Nettler, Peter Brimelow, Malcolm Fraser, John Coffey & Benjamin Frankel
NUMBER 9 / FALL 1987 / $4.50

Back issues of *The National Interest* are available for only $7. Issue #16 (with the famous "End of History?" article) is sold out, but copies of the article and the packet of responses are available for $2 each. Please send a check or money order to:

The National Interest
1112 16th Street, NW, Suite 540
Washington, D.C. 20036

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The President's Men at the NSC

Part I. The Kissinger Revolution

Michael Charlton

*IN A SERIES of five programs broadcast by the BBC last year, Michael Charlton traced the evolution of the National Security Council from its inception under President Truman in 1947 to the Iran-*contra *affair of the Reagan years. In these programs, many of the principal figures in the history of the NSC talked very freely, and in detail, about their experiences and conflicting views of the organization.*

Mr. Charlton prepared the programs with a British audience in mind, but the programs contain much that is of interest to Americans, particularly when the United States is faced with the task of rethinking its foreign policy fundamentally.

In this issue of The National Interest *we publish some excerpts from the series dealing with the Nixon-Kissinger period. A second installment will appear in our Fall issue covering the Carter-Brzezinski years. In each case the programs have been edited.*

Michael Charlton is an Australian who lives in England. He has had a distinguished television and radio career in both countries. His articles and interviews on contemporary history in Encounter *are well known, and he is the author of several books, including* The Little Platoon, *which was reviewed in our Winter 1989/90 issue.*

Charlton: "Every institution is the lengthened shadow of one man," said Emerson, and in Henry Kissinger's time the power and influence of the National Security Council was extended far beyond the original intentions set down for it in President Truman's day. During the Nixon presidency, Henry Kissinger created a new center of power, unaccountable to anyone but the President of the United States.

According to Dean Rusk, secretary of state to Presidents Kennedy and Johnson, all the recent Presidents have looked askance at the foreign service, and come to Washington in a mind to cleanse the Temple. But President Nixon differed from his predecessors in the marked degree to which he held the State Department in contempt. His presidency continued to reflect the mistrust of institutions and the political class which he had accumulated in earlier life.

President Nixon was determined that the threads of strategic policies should be taken out of the hands of a cumbersome bureaucracy and drawn together in the White House, by Henry Kissinger and his staff. Before appointing him as his national security adviser, Nixon had spoken to Henry Kissinger of "a massive organizational problem" in American government, which he looked to Kissinger to resolve.

Kissinger: President Nixon was extremely suspicious of the State Department, and thought that it was dominated by the Ivy League colleges and what he considered—and what was considered at the time—a liberal ideology. And he thought this was, on

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the whole, true of the CIA too. So he wanted to set up a system in which his philosophy could find a better expression. In the end I developed the conviction that the system really doesn't make all that much difference. He insisted on setting up a system—it's usually been blamed on me but I had no great views when I entered the government on how it should be organized—but he insisted on setting up a system in which all the major committees were chaired in the White House by the White House.

He did that on the advice of President Eisenhower. I heard Eisenhower give that advice, and this created terribly bad feelings on the part of the State Department. But it really doesn't make any difference, because whether you chair a committee does not define the influence. One does not go to the President and say, "I'm chairman of the such and such committee and therefore you have to listen to me." If that's what you have to say you're already in deep trouble. And I notice now in the Bush administration they're right back to the system of Nixon, that all the key committees are chaired by the White House. The real issue is whether there is a President who has an articulated view of foreign policy, whether there is a secretary of state who can impose his basic direction, and whether you can then organize the government in such a way that these directives are in fact carried out.

Charlton: Nixon has said it was you who thought that the National Security Council system should not just coordinate foreign policy—its original task in 1947, although modified by Eisenhower and Kennedy later—but should also develop policy options for him to consider before he made his decisions.

Kissinger: That is correct. . . . The trouble with our big departments is this: We don't have, well we do have a professional foreign service, but it is not organized like the British Foreign Service, with a permanent head, so it changes much more frequently. And it doesn't have an established strategic view. So our departments become really lobbying machines for their preferred point of view. I used to joke that the State Department gave you three options—nuclear war, unconditional surrender, and their preference. And in addition, they have an almost diabolical skill in finding some phrase of art which they sneak into a presidential speech, the significance of which you do not understand in the White House, or the President certainly cannot possibly understand, which they then use as a charter to do something that was not really intended.

Charlton: The force and clarity of Henry Kissinger's insights carried the day, and his mordant wit was an echo of President Kennedy's complaint about the State Department that "They never come up with anything new over there." The State Department were meteorologists. Henry Kissinger and his staff were rainmakers.

Eisenhower's NSC had worked well in bringing together for the President the views of other officials, but was criticized for its bias towards consensus, rather than developing clear choices for presidential action.

The system established by Henry Kissinger for President Nixon certainly concentrated this activity in the White House, but in parting company with Eisenhower's system of committees it then went on to break new ground altogether. The critically important nature of the difference is recalled by William Hyland, who was Henry Kissinger's senior aide in his White House years.

Hyland: Well, Eisenhower's chairing of committees was much different. In essence it was the cabinet redone two or three times or with an addition of this man for that man. The Kissinger level was below the cabinet level, but by being totally in control of the flow of paper and options and ideas it became, in effect, the government. So that, when the cabinet met, the NSC being at the cabinet level, much of the work had already been done and the options had been nar-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

rowed in a way that Nixon and Kissinger wanted. So that the cabinet officers didn't have a great deal of discretion and the President, in effect, had already cooked the books in a way that he wanted. Now Eisenhower I don't think did that. I think Eisenhower was more interested in exchanges and letting the system work for a while, even though he had very strong views.

Charlton: Was it a subject for discussion or any unease at the time that what in effect was a surrogate State Department was being established in the White House?

Hyland: There was great bitterness in the State Department. It was obvious there were very bad relations—at different levels and over different subjects—but gradually the State Department, being a pliable organization, understood that Kissinger was "the action" and that, if they wanted something, they should work through the NSC system.

Charlton: In effect, as William Hyland suggests, a surrogate State Department had been brought inside the White House and Kissinger's NSC was "virtually the government." It was a tale of Troy. The heads of the various agencies from whose experts Kissinger solicited his analyses and options, including the secretary of state, could now be excluded from any significant role in the making of decisions. This transformation of the National Security Council meant that it was no longer a clearing house for competitive interests. By telling the bureaucracy what to research and when to report, and by being in sole control of the documents sent up for the President to read—thus "cooking the books," as William Hyland put it—policy-making was virtually limited to the President, with his great interest in foreign affairs, and to Kissinger himself.

If it might be said that there was a hole at the center of American government, Kissinger's muscular intellect was unclouded by doubt as to what was needed to fill it.

Kissinger: It is imperative that the President has a staff who does three things. One, to make sure that the recommendations that come forward are presented in the clearest way possible. Secondly, to make sure that the departments present realistic options. And third, if necessary, to produce another option if it is thought that the existing options are inadequate.

Charlton: In that seminal book you wrote about the statesmanship of Castlereagh and Metternich in the last century, *A World Restored*, you say this: "The spirit of policy and that of bureaucracy are diametrically opposed. The essence of policy is contingency, its success depends on the correctness of an estimate which is in part conjectural. The essence of bureaucracy is its quest for safety. Its success is calculability." Was that in essence how you saw the opportunity of the security adviser's role?

Kissinger: I felt that a security adviser's role was making sure that we were focused on objectives and not simply operating the status quo. And of defining at any point a notion of where we were going. But I might make one other point here. My role is usually described as a quest for achieving a powerful position. It ought to be kept in mind I arrived as a professor from Harvard, a Rockefeller supporter who hadn't even met Nixon before I became security adviser. My role developed, primarily for one reason—none of the established bureaucracies was prepared to face the heat of the Vietnam War. And so, even though I had never had a press conference in my life, I was forced to brief on Vietnam. And I did not have to fight people off while I was doing this. Now, when you are prepared to work on the problem of greatest interest to the President, and the others are in their foxholes, then you achieve a stronger position.

Charlton: But it seems to me that such misunderstanding and difficulties that arise between the formal bureaucracies and the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

way the national security role developed were already brilliantly encapsulated in what you said in *A World Restored.*

Kissinger: And I think it is true bureaucracies like to continue the existing pattern. Because it wouldn't *be* the existing pattern if they didn't believe in it. The task of the leaders, of the statesman, is to make sure that this pattern still accords with realities. And therefore the definition of goals is not likely to come from the bureaucracy.

Charlton: The crucial phrase being the spirit of policy and that of bureaucracy are diametrically opposed.

Kissinger: Well, this I wrote as a professor. And it is true, today I might drop the word "diametrically." I would today phrase it more carefully.

Charlton: Kissinger certainly viewed bureaucratic government as a blunt instrument, likely to produce crude rather than subtle decisions. As the demiurge of a new American grand strategy, he brought to bear a different theory of leadership. It sought above all to steady America's customary oscillations between intervention and withdrawal from world engagements.

Kissinger: We wanted a permanent engagement in world affairs and we wanted to gear it to the protection of the national interest. American foreign policy tends to have its psychiatric components. And there is much discussion about the personalities of foreign leaders changing the domestic structures of other countries and turning foreign policy, as if it were some kind of reform movement. Our intention was to do what I think Britain has done so well, or had done so well for several hundred years, that is to define what the American national interest is unemotionally. And it got us into trouble with both liberals and conservatives. And in this sense the Nixon foreign policy was un-American.

Charlton: You said psychiatric components. Psychological or psychiatric?

Kissinger: Well, there are some Americans who tend to treat foreign policy as if it were a subdivision of psychiatry. And they talk about the personalities of foreign leaders from whom we have to gain goodwill. Whenever we enter a negotiation, American media advise us to remove the pressures which produced the negotiations to begin with. Maybe psychological is a better word than psychiatric.

Charlton: It was said that you were interested in the theory of decision-making. What was the theory of decision-making that you encouraged at the White House?

Kissinger: You know, the way American government runs, it has some of the aspects of monarchy during the periods that kings still had executive authority. So you cannot really say there is a good abstract theory. It has to be geared to the personality of the President.

Charlton: Dr. Kissinger makes the point that because the presidency is an unroyal form of kingship, his own influence derived less from the administrative changes he implemented than from having the confidence of the President.

As it was, both Nixon and Kissinger believed that some conceptual sense of how to get out of Vietnam without destroying America's position in the world had to be developed. According to William Hyland, both Nixon and Kissinger felt the traditional institutions of foreign policy-making were unlikely to demonstrate the necessary spirit of innovation.

Hyland: I think you could also say that their view was that it was this immense bureaucracy—even under a strong President like Lyndon Johnson—that got us deeper and deeper into Vietnam. So that it wasn't simply having a strong staff, or having a strong President, it was having a much clearer idea

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of where you wanted to go. The NSC as an instrument grew more, I think, inadvertently than people realize. It was the SALT talks of all things that gave Kissinger the kind of entrée to almost every other aspect of policy, and this had not necessarily been intentional. The first planning for SALT was not done under Kissinger, it was done by a traditional interdepartmental group. It was when Kissinger and Nixon realized that that was not a very good outcome that they began to move for greater White House control.

Charlton: To what extent did the conduct of the very complex diplomacy of detente actually encourage an American form of what I suppose a Marxist-Leninist might call "democratic centralism"? In other words, was it the byzantine secrecy of the Leninist states with whom Nixon and Kissinger were dealing that produced something of a mirror image in American policy-making institutions?

Hyland: I think so. I think the fact that the Russians like to deal secretly, and like to keep publicity away from the negotiations, provided an opening. And then when you have a President, such as Nixon, who was distrustful of most of his subordinates, certainly of the government and the Congress at large, and said so, then you have a situation where secret diplomacy becomes almost inevitable. The Russians prefer it, your own President prefers it, and therefore it starts.

Charlton: Henry Kissinger added to his aura of power and mystery by becoming the first Western statesman to penetrate the intimacies of the closed and secret world established by Lenin and Stalin. Kissinger talked, as no other Western statesman had ever talked, to Brezhnev, Mao Tse Tung, and Chou en Lai. He coaxed China out of isolation to stand with the West against Soviet power. These were brilliant episodes in international politics and in educating the American people in the balance of power.

But the exercise of the almost monarchial power which Nixon dispensed, and which Kissinger required for the conduct of his diplomacy, again did not accord with the instincts of a republic which had become a democracy. It was absolute and secretive. But it was necessarily geared, as Henry Kissinger maintains it must be, to the nature of the President.

Kissinger: Nixon didn't really like big meetings.

Charlton: Who controlled the agenda? Who decided what was put on the agenda for Nixon?

Kissinger: I had a major influence on the agenda, as the cabinet secretary does in Britain. But, of course, Nixon approved the agenda.

Charlton: You would agree that he gave you a very considerable degree of latitude?

Kissinger: But every security adviser has more or less had that, except in the Reagan administration, where the system didn't really operate.

Charlton: The acid test of policy, you say again in *A World Restored*, is its ability to obtain domestic support, and that has two aspects. One, you tell us, is the problem of legitimizing a policy within the governmental apparatus, which is bureaucratic rationality; and the other that of harmonizing it with the national experience, which is the problem of historical development. As for the problem of bureaucratic rationality, you say that Metternich had far greater problems with Austria than he did with Russia, Castlereagh far greater problems with his own cabinet than he did with his foreign minister colleagues. What was this problem of bureaucratic rationality in Washington?

Kissinger: What is it in general?

Charlton: In your time, particularly because of the great bureaucratic rows that centered on it.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Kissinger: Well actually, you know there are so many books written by people who don't know anything and pick up one classified document. There weren't all that many bureaucratic rows. That wasn't our problem. Our problem was more, after Watergate, the congressional rows. The tendency of the bureaucracy has to be understood in terms of how the system works. Every day thousands of cables arrive in the State Department. They go to a country director. His countries have the problem of a client. He wants to solve the problem. The way to solve the problem is to try to meet whatever complaint has arisen. So you get a lot of individual issues, and there's a temptation for the middle and lower level bureaucrat to be a lobbyist for the country that is in his jurisdiction.

It's the task of the higher levels of the State Department and the secretary of state and of the security adviser, depending on the mix, to make sure that these issues get put into some sort of an integrated strategy. And that may produce occasional rows. The rows that occurred, of a fundamental nature, developed on negotiating concessions towards the end, largely on arms control. And this developed really in opposition to the Nixon approach, and my approach, of trying to develop a national interest. We were attacked by the liberals for being too power-oriented. And by the conservatives for being too relativistic. And that then found expression in specific issues like, should we promote Jewish immigration from the Soviet Union? We had in fact already promoted it, but we did not want to put it on the formal agenda because we believed, as it turned out correctly, that that would make it less likely to be achieved.

Charlton: But it was the masterful manipulations that they appear to have resented. Those things inseparable from the diplomatic skill that you had written about so eloquently with reference to Metternich and Castlereagh. Take Gerard Smith, for example, who was the leader of the official SALT delegation in the early 1970s. His complaint of you was that while he was the leader of the official delegation you were "negotiating behind the back of all responsible administration officials except the President." He said that "It was a one man stand, a presidential aide against the resources of the Soviet leadership." And, "for some months the White House had carried out one line of SALT policy while directing the delegation to take another."

Kissinger: But that is absolute nonsense. Gerard Smith is a fine man, a dedicated public servant. I was chairing all the meetings of all the interdepartmental committees so I knew more than he did about what the departments were thinking. It wasn't that I was operating off the top of my head. I knew what the departments were thinking, from daily contact with these interdepartmental groups. He had reached a stalemate with the local Soviet representative who, following the official Soviet line, wanted defensive weapons to be settled first. And only after such an agreement was signed would a new negotiation start on offensive weapons. Gerry Smith had all kinds of gimmicks to mitigate this, but he could not break that deadlock. Not because Smith wasn't any good but because his opposite number didn't have the authority. I took that one issue and negotiated it with Kosygin. That was the one issue that I negotiated behind Smith's back. Not because I didn't trust Smith but because he didn't have an opposite number. And because the tendency of his group was to make more concessions on that issue than we in Washington thought was necessary.

Charlton: Gerard Smith's attack on the conspiratorial aspects of Kissinger and Nixon's "back-channel" diplomacy, during the SALT negotiations, uncovers the depth of resentment over the paramount role the national security adviser and his staff had come to play. William Hyland was a pivotal figure in Kissinger's team during the negotiations that led to the first agreement on strategic arms limitation.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Hyland: Well, there's a great deal of bitterness about this period. It's surprising to me, considering that Smith and his delegation, and Kissinger and his staff, all basically wanted to try and get a decent agreement. The bitterness that is left over I think is a matter of personal pride and personalities; these people simply don't like each other.

Charlton: But an outsider is constantly invited to suppose that Kissinger was providing merely a series of brilliant improvisations, that he was a virtuoso without a coherent score—that is the general tenor of the critique. Smith appears to reinforce that when he says that "there were no building blocks in this process. No analytical work. No strategic analysis in the agencies most directly concerned. No consultation with allies or committees." Smith continues, "It was a one-man stand. A presidential aide against the resources of the Soviet Politburo."

Hyland: Yes, I think that's just baloney. This came after three and a half years of intensive daily work on SALT. I happened to be with Kissinger in that negotiation. The Russians wanted an agreement. At the end of the day they caved in and quickly wanted it signed, and we had some very bad feelings with the delegation in Helsinki.

Charlton: But respected historians and figures who have had high places in governments themselves—people like Robert Bowie, who was Dulles's aide in the State Department—talk about the National Security Council system being "perverted" in these years. "It was a perverted system." It's a strong word to use.

Hyland: Well, that presupposes there is a norm, an ideal system, which is not true. Which system was perverted—Eisenhower's system or Kennedy's system? That the system should operate against some theory or some standard which doesn't exist? What people cannot get through their heads is the system of the President. The President of the United States is not a prisoner of the NSC. I know of no President who has been; I know of no President who isn't willing to tell his security advisers to do something that they don't want to do. So if you want to say "Nixon's system was different and I don't like it," that's a legitimate attack, but you can't say it was perverted because it was Nixon's system. Suppose Nixon had said, "No NSC at all. Goodbye. Clean 'em out." Would that have been a perversion? I suppose so, but it would have been Nixon's approach, just as Ford and Carter and Reagan had their own preferences.

Charlton: My own interpretation of that is that it bears really on this question of secret diplomacy versus public diplomacy. The Congress would appear to believe that America's public policies must be publicly conducted and the use of the back channel, so-called, throughout these negotiations is regarded as almost an un-American activity?

Hyland: That's true. We have the tradition of open covenants openly arrived at, all the Wilsonian heritage, and secret diplomacy is almost always open to some kind of an attack—usually from the Congress and usually from people who have not been involved in it. But no one would criticize Kennedy for keeping secret, from the American people and the Congress, a huge crisis in Cuba for seven to ten days. Few would criticize, after it became public, its resolution in very private diplomacy. Some would now say that Bobby Kennedy went very far in making major concessions to Dobrynin that were not known to McNamara and Rusk.

Charlton: You mean over the missiles in Turkey?

Hyland: The missiles in Turkey. But it seems to me that secret diplomacy, when it has worked, has usually been thought well of by people. No one criticizes the SALT agreement, while it was ratified by ninety-something votes, because it was arrived at secretly. It was later in 1974, when Nixon got

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

into a great deal of trouble, that it became part of this "conspiratorial" charge against the government and so forth.

Charlton: Kissinger was at home in the nineteenth-century world to which he had devoted so much scholarly attention, the world of Metternich and Castlereagh and Talleyrand, "a world restored" by the intelligent manipulation of the balance of power. There is, however, no safety valve in the American constitution which allows objectives and conceptions that one branch of the Constitution dislikes, or resists, to be sustained.

If the new balance of world power struck by Kissinger and Nixon was a challenge to the American tradition of "open covenants, openly arrived at," could it have been achieved in any other way?

Kissinger: You take the China issue. What happened there was actually the following. Nixon, supported by me, wanted to open with China. And we started out doing it in the regular way. We wanted our ambassador in Warsaw to establish contact. He was afraid of the China lobby and also of what allies would say. It took us many months to get him to do it. Finally it started. The Chinese proposed that we send somebody to Beijing. This was all done in regular channels. A book was then prepared by the State Department of what should be negotiated: immunities, transportation, communication, housing. A briefing mechanism was supposed to be set up with seventeen other nations. And with congressional people. All the time we didn't know what was on the Chinese mind yet. And we were afraid we would have to give so many assurances before we ever got there that we'd never get there. So, at a break in those negotiations, we pulled it into the White House. I must tell you nobody from the State Department ever came to us and said, please let *us* do it. They were happy enough to be rid of it. This is why that occurred. And it is never so simple as simply a power grab.

Charlton: Henry Kissinger, whose brilliance lay in grasping opportunities and following where they led him, used the NSC system with immense authority and precision. But the concentration of power in this personal fief of the President in the White House was unprecedented. The emerging tensions inherent in having a national security adviser who was also, de facto, secretary of state seemed resolved only when Kissinger came to hold both positions formally. After Kissinger, the tensions boiled over.

Next Issue, Part II of The President's Men at the NSC: The Struggle Under Carter.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Credit Ratings

Owen Harries

LAST DECEMBER, at a time when most people were deeply moved by the incredible drama being played out in Central Europe, Michael Kinsley kept his head. Instead of writing a celebratory piece or shooting for historical resonance and perspective, he resolutely sank to the occasion and opted for polemics. The single-minded point of his column "Who Killed Communism?" (the *New Republic*, December 4, 1989) is to deny conservatives any special credit for having either predicted or helped cause the demise of Soviet totalitarianism.

On the question of prediction, Kinsley takes Jeane Kirkpatrick as representative of conservatives. He scrupulously acknowledges that in her influential essay, "Dictatorship and Double Standards," she did not close the door tight by declaring that it was utterly impossible for totalitarian regimes to transform themselves. "Nevertheless," he maintains, "the seemingly immutable nature of totalitarian governments, compared with authoritarian ones, was a cornerstone of her argument"—and of the thinking of conservatives in general. Far from having predicted the collapse of communism, "conservative doctrine had been that it would never come."

Again, after acknowledging that mainstream conservatives had supported the policy of containment in the Cold War, Kinsley goes on:

> But the conservative view (unlike that of the father of containment, George Kennan) has never been that a contained communism could collapse of its own internal contradictions. Quite the opposite. The conservative view has been that communism could always rise above its internal contradictions. Its manifest failure to deliver what it promised would neither persuade its leaders as a matter of logic nor force them as a practical matter to abandon their quest for world domination—let alone their hold on their own societies.

It was the staying-power and stability of communism, Kinsley maintains, not its "contradictions" or weaknesses, that conservatives stressed.

In Kinsley's mind, this point is directly relevant to the question of who deserves credit for the turn things have taken. In the spirit of someone drawing attention to an evident absurdity, he writes "Conservatives, having said the collapse of communism would not happen, now claim credit for it."

He is especially concerned to deny the Reagan administration a special role. America's policy of containment undoubtedly hastened the day, he allows, "But the [conservative] party line that containment was abandoned in the 1970s and had to be reinvented by Reagan is 99 percent myth." The most he will concede is that, by chance,

Owen Harries is editor of *The National Interest*.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Reaganite extremism" combined well with the liberal opposition to produce an effective policy:

> To the extent that American policies of the 1980s had any effect at all in producing the current historic developments that no one predicted, what seems to have worked was an inadvertently clever good-cop, bad-cop strategy. Negative incentives for bad behavior don't work without positive incentives for good behavior.

Thus any credit should be shared, presumably more or less equally, between conservatives and liberals.

In the March issue of *Commentary*, Richard Pipes devotes part of a major article on Gorbachev's Russia to taking issue with Kinsley. He concedes that conservatives who drew a sharp distinction between authoritarian and totalitarian states "underestimated the decay of communist countries and expected the collapse of totalitarianism to take longer than has actually turned out to be the case." But he insists that no responsible adherent of this school of thought ever regarded totalitarianism as permanently fixed or immutable. Even the most pessimistic of them, Jean François Revel, recognized that it is "doomed to disappear someday."

As for the conservative position on containment, Pipes is in flat disagreement with Kinsley, maintaining that it subscribed fully to the Kennan thesis:

> The hard-liners believed that firmness on the part of the West would not only contain but in time fundamentally alter the communist system: the harder they were, the more confident they felt of democracy's eventual triumph over totalitarianism.

He quotes from speeches delivered by Ronald Reagan in the early 1980s and his own writing during the same period to show that at least two conservatives recognized that the Soviet system was in a state of crisis and predicted the triumph of the West, well before Gorbachev had appeared with his perestroika and glasnost.

Pipes concludes his response to Kinsley by going on the attack:

> Even if one admits that the conservatives, along with everyone else, saw the communists as more solidly entrenched than they turned out to be, the conservatives at least correctly diagnosed totalitarian regimes to be suffering from an incurable disease. It was their opponents on the Left who insisted that the patient was in good health.

WHAT IS one to make of this exchange? Rather to my surprise, Kinsley's account of how conservatives saw things accords better with my memory of how things were—from the 1950s through the 1970s, not just in the Reagan years—than does Pipes's version.

Yes, of course, we all recognized that the Soviet totalitarian system would one day go, by one means or another—in the sense that, ultimately, all things must go. That recognition was usually there somewhere in the small print (in the case of Hannah Arendt, for example, as a couple of sentences on the last page of her book).

But, that is not where the emphasis was, not what conservatives and anticommunists were impressed by throughout the Cold War. It was the implacable power of totalitarianism—the combination of the scale of its ambition, the scope of its control and penetration, those famous "transmission belts," its ability to mobilize and discipline, the "iron band of terror"—that dominated the conservative imagination, not any sense of its vulnerability or impermanence. The compelling images were those provided by Koestler's *Darkness at Noon* and Orwell's *1984* with its terrible, "If you want a picture of the future, imagine a boot stamping on a human face—forever."

True, conservatives subscribed to containment, and the logic behind the policy of containment was that by frustrating the messianic ambitions of Soviet totalitarianism it would ultimately bring about change. But, as I remember it, Kinsley is right—few conser-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

vatives really believed that logic. We bought containment not out of conviction but by default, as the only game in town. War in a nuclear world was out of the question as an instrument of policy; "liberation" or "roll back," an irresponsible rhetorical fraud, decisively exposed by the Hungarian Revolution of 1956. So we supported containment, but not with optimism, not confident of democracy's triumph, as Pipes maintains. The prevailing mood of anticommunists was pessimistic and defensive. We thought more about preventing the further spread of communism, limiting its successes, than about bringing it down. We were more aware of the weaknesses and vulnerabilities of the West—its illusions, uncertain will, doubtful staying power, internal divisions—than of the Soviet Union. Most of the time I don't think that we expected to win but simply hoped not to lose. Had it been an offer, we would have settled for a draw.

While, if asked, we would have agreed that, of necessity, totalitarianism must one day end, *we had no theory to explain how that would happen*. In fact, what theory there was made it difficult to see how it *could* happen. The ideal type of totalitarianism, as developed by Arendt and others, stressed the inner coherence, the dynamism, the efficiency, the *totality* of the thing—making the combination of messianic goals and modern techniques seem very formidable indeed (even giving it, on occasion, a kind of obscene glamour).

It is true that, as time went on, we became increasingly aware of the weaknesses and failures of the Soviet system—the huge gap between the theoretical model and the reality—and there is substance in Pipes's claim that "conservatives at least correctly diagnosed totalitarian regimes to be suffering from an incurable disease." But very few of us saw it as a life threatening disease. It produced, so to speak, a terrible body odor, sores, and various deformities, but it wasn't going to kill the system off, not anytime soon, and it did not diminish the capacity to inflict harm. Most of us would have agreed with Brzezinski that even if its innards were rotten, it still had hands of steel.

A sentence from Revel's *How Democracies Perish* quoted by Kinsley conveys well the sense of indestructible power that totalitarianism projected for conservatives, even when its weaknesses were known (and it is surely a sentence that represents Revel's central beliefs more accurately than the rather limp acknowledgement of totalitarianism's ultimate demise quoted by Pipes):

> A system that has grown so strong despite so many failings, that increasingly dominates the world even when no one wants anything to do with it. . . must nevertheless embody a principle of action and monopolization of power more effective than any mankind has even known before.

As I remember it, then, Kinsley is absolutely right in saying that conservatives did not anticipate the collapse or sudden transformation of communism. Most of us expected an indefinite stalemate, with any changes being slow and incremental. It is clear from the passages he quotes from his own writing that Richard Pipes was an exception, and that by the early 1980s, at least, he was convinced that the Soviet system was in deep crisis, with sweeping reform the only alternative to revolution. That he was an exception is not surprising. He had not only a profound understanding of Russian history but, as a member of the National Security Council staff in the early 1980s, access to the best available U.S. intelligence on the Soviet Union. (Though subsequent revelations as to its quality suggest that exposure to that intelligence might have been a mixed blessing.) It is nice but overgenerous of him to assume that the rest of us saw things as clearly as he did.

If Kinsley is right in this one respect, is he also right to conclude that, having failed to anticipate and predict it, conservatives have no right to claim credit for the collapse of communism? No, he is not. It isn't necessary to have predicted something to share the credit for its happening; you only need to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

have acted in ways that contributed to bringing it about. And conservatives did that.

They may have been overimpressed by the stability and permanence of communist totalitarianism, but they never doubted that it was evil, never dabbled in moral equivalence. Their opposition to it may have been pessimistic in character, but it was resolute and consistent—much more so than that of liberals, especially from the late 1960s on. They may have been skeptical about George Kennan's logic in the Mr. X article, but they acted in ways that allowed it to be put to the test. And while Kinsley is right in saying that containment was not completely abandoned by liberals in the 1970s, their commitment to it during that decade was certainly less than robust. Detente, interdependence, the declining efficacy of force—increasingly these were the liberal preoccupations in international affairs, at a time when a Democratic President spoke of ending the "inordinate fear of communism." It was conservatives who manned the trenches of containment with most conviction.

Proof is not available, and it may never be, but it is perfectly plausible that the crucial upping of the ante by the Reagan administration in the early 1980s—the defense build-up, putting the Pershings in Europe, SDI, support for anticommunist guerrillas, no summitry for a whole presidential term—contributed decisively towards transforming what was a chronic crisis in the Soviet Union into an acute one, demanding recognition and action by the Soviet leadership.

When Kinsley attempts to claim equal credit for liberals with his "inadvertently clever good-cop, bad-cop strategy," he is at his least convincing. It may be true that "negative incentives for bad behavior don't work without positive incentives for good behavior"; but only too often what liberals and the Left proposed could be better described as unilateral concessions in response to offensive behavior.

There is no need for conservatives to be teased by the Kinsleys into making exaggerated claims to prescience. We never trivialized the problem of dealing with communist totalitarianism, never equated concern about the threat it posed with paranoia, never found anything the least bit attractive in New Soviet Man, never argued the wisdom of unilateral disarmament or marched under the banner "Better Red than Dead." We got some things wrong, but the account of the Soviet system now being given by its own spokesmen is very close to what conservatives always believed—and were dismissed as biased and obsessive for believing. Our mistakes were of the kind that generally led to sound, prudent policy.

That is good enough ground to stand on.

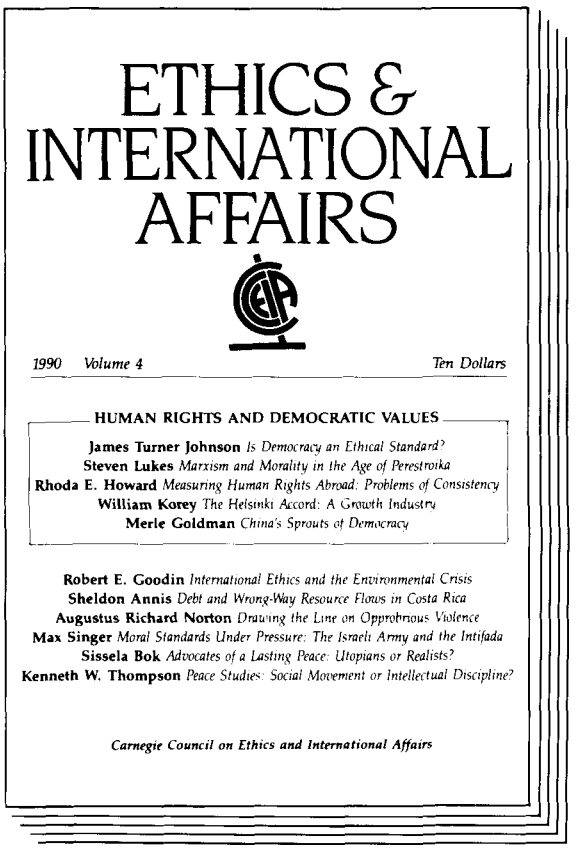
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Ethics and International Affairs?

It's Not A Contradiction.

Explore the connection in

ETHICS & INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS.


ETHICS &
INTERNATIONAL
AFFAIRS
1990 Volume 4
Ten Dollars
HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRATIC VALUES
James Turner Johnson Is Democracy an Ethical Standard?
Steven Lukes Marxism and Morality in the Age of Perestroika
Rhoda E. Howard Measuring Human Rights Abroad: Problems of Consistency
William Korey The Helsinki Accord: A Growth Industry
Merle Goldman China's Sprouts of Democracy
Robert E. Goodin International Ethics and the Environmental Crisis
Sheldon Annis Debt and Wrong-Way Resource Flows in Costa Rica
Augustus Richard Norton Drawing the Line on Opprobrious Violence
Max Singer Moral Standards Under Pressure: The Israeli Army and the Intifada
Sissela Bok Advocates of a Lasting Peace: Utopians or Realists?
Kenneth W. Thompson Peace Studies: Social Movement or Intellectual Discipline?
Carnegie Council on Ethics and International Affairs

Published annually by the
Carnegie Council on Ethics and International Affairs

☐ Please send me _____ copies of the 1990 edition of ETHICS & INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, Volume 4 @ $10 per copy ($12 outside U.S. and Canada).

☐ Please send me Volumes 1 through 4 for only $35. ($40 outside the U.S. and Canada)

Enclosed is $_____

Make checks payable to **Carnegie Council**.
Payment must accompany order.

Shipping charges included.

Name _____ (Please Print)

Address _____

Apt. _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Carnegie Council on Ethics and International Affairs
Merrill House 170 East 64th Street, NY 10021

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED